5: Grinnell Q,T-5 (ca.1888) 1962
NF6 Blackfoot NF6

539 They were now great friends. Many Snakes had married Piegan women, and many Piegans had married Snake women. At last all was ready. The great chiefs mounted their horses and started out, and soon both parties were strung out on the trail.

Some young men, however, stayed behind to gamble a while. It was yet early in the morning, and by riding fast it would not take them long to catch up with their camps. All day they kept playing; and sometimes the Piegans would win, and sometimes the Snakes.

It was now almost sunset. "Let us have one horse race," they said, "and we will stop." Each side had a good horse, and they ran their best; but they came in so close together it could not be told who won. The Snakes claimed that their horse won, and the Piegans would not allow it. So they got angry and began to quarrel, and pretty soon they began to fight and to shoot at each other, and some were killed.

● [648] Since that time the Snakes and Piegans have never been at peace.

5: Grinnell Q,T-5 (ca.1888) 1962
NF6 Blackfoot NF6

TWO WAR TRAILS

I

539 Many years ago there lived in the Blood camp a boy named Screech Owl (A'-tsi-tsi). He was rather a lonely boy, and did not care to go with other boys. He liked better to be by himself. Often he would go off alone, and stay out all night away from the camp. He used to pray to all kinds of birds and animals that he saw, and ask them to take pity on him and help him, saying that he wanted to be a warrior. He never used paint. He was a fine looking young man, and he thought it was foolish to use paint to make oneself good looking.

● [648] When Screech Owl was about fourteen years old, a large party of Blackfeet were starting to war against the Crees and the Assinaboines. The young man said to his father: "Father, with this war party many of my cousins are going. I think that now I am old enough to go to war, and I would like to join them." His father said, "My son, I am willing; you may go." So he joined the party.

His father gave his son his own war horse, a black horse with a white spot on its side — a very fast horse. He offered him arms, but the boy refused them all, except a little trapping axe. He said, "I think this hatchet will be all that I shall need." Just as they were about to start, his father gave the boy his own war headdress. This was not a war bonnet, but a plume made of small feathers, the feathers of thunder birds, for the thunder bird was his father's medicine. He said to the boy, "Now, my son, when you

The people cut strips of green hide, and tied stones in the middle, and made large mauls, and broke in the skulls of the buffalo, and killed them. 539

After he had taught those people these things, he started off again, travelling north, until he came to where Bow and Elbow rivers meet. There he made some more people, and taught them the same things. From here he again went on northward. When he had come nearly to the Red Deer's River, he reached the hill where the Old Man sleeps. There he lay down and rested himself. The form of his body is to be seen there yet.

When he awoke from his sleep, he travelled further northward and came to a fine high hill. He climbed to the top of it, and there sat down to rest. He looked over the country below him, and it pleased him. Before him the hill was steep, and he said to himself, "Well, this is a fine place for sliding; I will have some fun," and he began to slide down the hill. The marks where he slid down are to be seen yet, and the place is known to all people as the "Old Man's Sliding Ground."

This is as far as the Blackfeet followed Old Man. The Crees know what he did further north.

In later times once, *Na'pi* said, "Here I will mark you off a piece of ground," and he did so.[1] Then he said: "There is your land, and it is full of all kinds of animals, and many things grow in this land. Let no other people come into it. This is for you five tribes (Blackfeet, Bloods, [648] Piegans, Gros Ventres, Sarcees). When people come to cross the line, take your bows and arrows, your lances and

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[1] The boundaries of this land are given as running east from a point in the summit of the Rocky Mountains west of Fort Edmonton, taking in the country to the east and south, including the Porcupine Hills, Cypress Mountains, and Little Rocky Mountains, down to the mouth of the Yellowstone on the Missouri; then west to the head of the Yellowstone, and across the Rocky Mountains to the Beaverhead; thence to the summit of the Rocky Mountains and north along them to the starting-point. 131

THE PAST AND THE PRESENT

FIFTY years ago the name Blackfoot was one of terrible 101
meaning to the white traveller who passed across that desolate [131]
buffalo-trodden waste which lay to the north of the
Yellowstone River and east of the Rocky Mountains. This [162]
was the Blackfoot land, the undisputed home of a people
which is said to have numbered in one of its tribes — the
Pi-kŭn'-i — 8000 lodges, or 40,000 persons. Besides these, [619]
there were the Blackfeet and the Bloods, three tribes of
one nation, speaking the same language, having the same
customs, and holding the same religious faith.

But this land had not always been the home of the Blackfeet. 174
Long ago, before the coming of the white men, they 101
had lived in another country far to the north and east, about
Lesser Slave Lake, ranging between Peace River and the
Saskatchewan, and having for their neighbors on the north
the Beaver Indians. Then the Blackfeet were a timber
people. It is said that about two hundred years ago the [648]
Chippeweyans from the east invaded this country and drove
them south and west. Whether or no this is true, it is quite
certain that not many generations back the Blackfeet lived
on the North Saskatchewan River and to the north of that
stream.[1] Gradually working their way westward, they at [231]
length reached the Rocky Mountains, and, finding game
abundant, remained there until they obtained horses, in the
very earliest years of the present century. When they

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[1] For a more extended account of this migration, see *American Anthropologist*, April, 1892, p. 153. [113]

101 secured horses and guns, they took courage and began to
174 venture out on to the plains and to go to war. From this
[131] time on, the Blackfeet made constant war on their neighbors
to the south, and in a few years controlled the whole country
[648] between the Saskatchewan on the north and the Yellowstone
on the south.

133 It was, indeed, a glorious country which the Blackfeet had
wrested from their southern enemies. Here nature has
reared great mountains and spread out broad prairies.
Along the western border of this region, the Rocky Mountains
lift their snow-clad peaks above the clouds. Here and
[137] there, from north to south, and from east to west, lie minor
ranges, black with pine forests if seen near at hand, or in the
distance mere gray silhouettes against a sky of blue. Between
these mountain ranges lies everywhere the great
prairie; a monotonous waste to the stranger's eye, but not
[137] without its charm. It is brown and bare; for, except
during a few short weeks in spring, the sparse bunch-grass is
sear and yellow, and the silver gray of the wormwood lends
an added dreariness to the landscape. Yet this seemingly
desert waste has a beauty of its own. At intervals it is
marked with green winding river valleys, and everywhere it
is gashed with deep ravines, their sides painted in strange
colors of red and gray and brown, and their perpendicular
walls crowned with fantastic columns and figures of stone or
[137] clay, carved out by the winds and the rains of ages. Here
and there, rising out of the plain, are curious sharp ridges,
or square-topped buttes with vertical sides, sometimes bare,
and sometimes dotted with pines, — short, sturdy trees, whose
gnarled trunks and thick, knotted branches have been
twisted and wrung into curious forms by the winds which
blow unceasingly, hour after hour, day after day, and month
after month, over mountain range and prairie, through
gorge and coulée.

136 These prairies now seem bare of life, but it was not

136 always so. Not very long ago, they were trodden by multitudinous herds of buffalo and antelope; then, along the wooded river valleys and on the pine-clad slopes of the mountains, elk, deer, and wild sheep fed in great numbers. They are all gone now. The winter's wind still whistles over Montana prairies, but nature's shaggy-headed wild cattle no longer feel its biting blasts. Where once the scorching breath of summer stirred only the short stems of the buffalo-grass, it now billows the fields of the white man's grain. Half-hidden by the scanty herbage, a few bleached skeletons alone remain to tell us of the buffalo; and the broad, deep trails, over which the dark herds passed by thousands, are now grass-grown and fast disappearing under the effacing hand of time. The buffalo have disappeared, and the fate of the buffalo has almost overtaken the Blackfeet.

648 ● 105 As known to the whites, the Blackfeet were true prairie Indians, seldom venturing into the mountains, except when they crossed them to war with the Kutenais, the Flatheads, or the Snakes. They subsisted almost wholly on the flesh of the buffalo. They were hardy, untiring, brave, ferocious. Swift to move, whether on foot or horseback, they made long journeys to war, and with telling force struck their enemies. They had conquered and driven out from the territory which they occupied the tribes who once inhabited it, and maintained a desultory and successful warfare against all invaders, fighting with the Crees on the north, the Assinaboines on the east, the Crows on the south, and the Snakes, Kalispels, and Kutenais on the southwest and west. In those days the Blackfeet were rich and powerful. The buffalo fed and clothed them, and they needed nothing beyond what nature supplied. This was their time of success and happiness.

178 105 657 Crowded into a little corner of the great territory which they once dominated, and holding this corner by an uncer-

THE BLACKFOOT IN WAR

721 THE Blackfeet were a warlike people. How it may have
174 been in the old days, before the coming of the white men,
we do not know. Very likely, in early times, they were
[648] usually at peace with neighboring tribes, or, if quarrels took
place, battles were fought, and men killed, this was only in
angry dispute over what each party considered its rights.
Their wars were probably not general, nor could they have
[177] been very bloody. When, however, horses came into the
possession of the Indians, all this must have soon become
changed. Hitherto there had really been no incentive to
war. From time to time expeditions may have gone out
to kill enemies, — for glory, or to take revenge for some
injury, — but war had not yet been made desirable by the
hope of plunder, for none of their neighbors — any more
than themselves — had property which was worth capturing
and taking away. Primitive arms, dogs, clothing, and dried
meat were common to all the tribes, and were their only
possessions, and usually each tribe had an abundance of all
these. It was not worth any man's while to make long
journeys and to run into danger merely to increase his store
of such property, when his present possessions were more
than sufficient to meet all his wants. Even if such things
[482] had seemed desirable plunder, the amount of it which could
be carried away was limited, since — for a war party — the
only means of transporting captured articles from place to
place was on men's backs, nor could men burdened with
721 loads either run or fight. But when horses became known,

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231
[181]

721 continued for about seventy-five or eighty years, and has
[178] only been abandoned within the last six or seven, and since the settlement of the country by the whites made it impossible for the Blackfeet longer to pass backward and forward through it on their raiding expeditions. Horse-taking at once became what might be called an established industry
[554] among the Blackfeet. Success brought wealth and fame, and there was a pleasing excitement about the war journey. Except during the bitterest weather of the winter, war parties of Blackfeet were constantly out, searching for camps of their enemies, from whom they might capture horses. Usually the only object of such an expedition was to secure plunder, but often enemies were killed, and sometimes the party set out with the distinct intention of taking both scalps and horses.

● 648 Until some time after they had obtained guns, the Black-
726 feet were on excellent terms with the northern Crees, but later the Chippeways from the east made war on the Blackfeet, and this brought about general hostilities against all Crees, which have continued up to within a few years. If I recollect aright, the last fight which occurred between the Pi-
[123] kun'-i and the Crees took place in 1886. In this skirmish, which followed an attempt by the Crees to capture some Piegan horses, my friend, Tail-feathers-coming-in-sight-over-the-Hill, killed and counted *coup* on a Cree whose scalp he afterward sent me, as an evidence of his prowess.

The Gros Ventres of the prairie, of Arapaho stock, known to the Blackfeet as *At-séna,* or Gut People, had been friends and allies of the Blackfeet from the time they first came into the country, early in this century, up to about the year 1862, when, according to Clark, peace was broken through a mistake.[1] A war party of Snakes had gone to a Gros Ventres camp near the Bear Paw Mountains and there killed two Gros Ventres and taken a white pony, which they subse-

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[1] Indian Sign Language, p. 70.

quently gave to a party of Piegans whom they met, and with 648
whom they made peace. The Gros Ventres afterward saw 726
this horse in the Piegan camp and supposed that the latter
had killed their tribesman, and this led to a long war. In
the year 1867, the Piegans defeated the allied Crows and
Gros Ventres in a great battle near the Cypress Mountains,
in which about 450 of the enemy are said to have been
killed.

An expression often used in these pages, and which is so 555
familiar to one who has lived much with Indians as to need 726
no explanation, is the phrase to count *coup*. Like many
of the terms common in the Northwest, this one comes
down to us from the old French trappers and traders, and a
coup is, of course, a blow. As commonly used, the expression
is almost a direct translation of the Indian phrase to
strike the enemy, which is in ordinary use among all tribes.
This striking is the literal inflicting a blow on an individual,
and does not mean merely the attack on a body of enemies.

The most creditable act that an Indian can perform is to 181
show that he is brave, to prove, by some daring deed, his 555
physical courage, his lack of fear. In practice, this courage 726
is shown by approaching near enough to an enemy to strike
or touch him with something that is held in the hand — to
come up within arm's length of him. To kill an enemy is
praiseworthy, and the act of scalping him may be so under
certain circumstances, but neither of these approaches in
bravery the hitting or touching him with something held in
the hand. This is counting *coup*.

The man who does this shows himself without fear and is 555
respected accordingly. With certain tribes, as the Pawnees, 726
Cheyennes, and others, it was not very uncommon for a
warrior to dash up to an enemy and strike him before making
any attempt to injure him, the effort to kill being
secondary to the *coup*. The blow might be struck with
anything held in the hand, — a whip, coupstick, club, lance,

123 Many white men have to drive ten, twenty, or thirty miles
651 to the store, and you ought not to complain if you have to
do so."

After this conversation the man saw clearly that his request was an unreasonable one, but if I had merely told him that he was a fool to want a store on Cut Bank, he would never have been satisfied, for his experiences were so limited that he could not have reasoned the thing out for himself.

In my talks with these people, I praise those who have worked hard and lived well during the past year, while to those who have been idle or drunken or have committed crimes, I explain how foolish their course has been and try to show them how impossible it is for a man to be successful if he acts like a child, and shows that he is a person of no sense. A little quiet talk will usually demonstrate to them that they have been unwise, and they make fresh resolutions and promise amendment. Of course the only argument I use is to tell them that one course will be for their material advancement, and is the way a white man would act, while the other will tend to keep them always poor.

648 Some years ago, the Blackfeet made a new treaty, by
425 which they sold to the government a large portion of their
657 lands. By this treaty, which was ratified by Congress in
May, 1887, they are to receive $150,000 annually for a period of ten years, when government support is to be withdrawn. This sum is a good deal more than is required for their subsistence, and, by the terms of the treaty, the surplus over what is required for their food and clothing is to be used in furnishing to the Indians farming implements, seed, live stock, and such other things as will help them to become self-supporting.

131 The country which the Blackfeet inhabit lies just south of
132 the parallel of 49°, close to the foot of the Rocky Mountains,
and is very cold and dry. Crops can be grown there
311 successfully not more than once in four or five years, and
121

177 Blackfeet and his wife is 1/16. He was dressed in the familiar blue denim pants, cowboy shirt, boots, and hat.

177 The ranch Robert operates belonged to his father who had established the 177 home and herd in 1940. Robert had been given a few cows while he was in school 231 as payment for his work on the ranch. As his father grew older, more and more of the work had been turned over to Robert and his brother, until they have assumed complete charge. His father is dead; his mother lives with him.

177 What is Indian about Robert? He said he does not speak the language, although his father could. He knows nothing about the old Indian religion, lore, [191] or medicine. He and his parents before him were raised as Catholics and attended [177] church regularly. His great-grandmother was a full-blood Blackfeet, but his father and grandfather had both married white women, so he felt that his home background and training had been no different than it would have been if he had had no Indian ancestors, and had been born and raised on a similar ranch across the reservation line. Because they have lived on the reservation, he and members of his family have picked up, by observation and hearsay, a superficial knowledge of 177 Indians and Indian ways, but he evinced little interest in these things. A few of his relatives have taken an interest in the more formal aspects of pan-Indianism; they 527 participate, for example, in the major Indian Pow Wows such as the annual Indian [648] Encampment at Sheridan, Wyoming. Their participation is limited to marching or riding in the parade, entering a daughter in the Miss American Indian contest, or acting as a judge for this and other contests. They neither camp in the tepee circle nor participate in the dances.

Robert has gone to school with people who are more Indian than he, so he knows many kinds of people. His social activities, however, have been limited 177 to his family and their close friends—people much like himself. He casts Indian 829 problems into one or the other of two contexts. His immediate response to a question about Indians is to talk about reservation problems, of land, leasing, cattle, employment, and of the conflicts between "Indians" (the reservation population) and the "whites" (government officials, white farmers who bought or leased Indian land, and the local merchants). Within this context he is aligned with the tribe and the Indians. When the discussion turns to matters of Indian culture, his focus changes. At times he felt that people should let the Indians live the way they want to. At other times he commented that these beliefs and practices are doomed to extinction and should be helped on their way. The impressive thing was that this does not concern him. He suggested that I call upon some of the "Indians." "They can tell you about this." Within this context, Robert did not see himself as an Indian. What is an Indian? When and under what circumstances do people of mixed-blood see themselves as Indians and when not? Does the full-blood Indian think of people like Robert as Indian or white? Are they considered to be Indian or non-Indian by the white people who live around them?

177 Robert's recreational activities center around the ranch life. He rarely at- 517 tends the local Indian Days festivities. He is, however, among the audience at all local rodeos, fairs, and school meetings, and takes part in a few community service projects—those concerned with community development, schools, youth programs, cattle and range management programs.

133

Reservation grazing lands.

for Indians. This provides a summary of the environmental, social and cultural 128
characteristics shared by *all tribal members* who reside on the reservation which will serve as a context for an examination of intratribal differences.

The Regional Habitat

The Blackfeet Indian Reservation, approximately 2,400 square miles in area, 131
is located along the eastern slopes of the Rocky Mountains in northwestern Montana. It is bounded on the north by the United States-Canadian international boundary, on the west by the foothills of the Rockies, on the south by Birch Creek, and on the east by a line commencing at the junction of Cut Bank Creek and the Marias River, extended northward following the center of Cut Bank Creek for twenty miles, and then directly north to the Canadian border (see Fig. 1, frontispiece map).[4]

The land within these boundaries consists mainly of high, rolling prairies 133
which are interrupted by numerous rivers and creeks, and occasional ponds, lakes, buttes, and hills. A narrow strip, three to ten miles wide and about sixty miles in length, along the western border includes a few barren peaks of the Rocky Mountains and the forested hills and valleys of the foothill region. The mountains reach heights of eight to ten thousand feet, but the greater portion of the reservation ranges in altitude between forty-five hundred feet in the west to thirty-five hundred feet above sea level in the east.

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[4] The northern boundary was established by the Treaty of 1855 (U.S. Statutes XI, 1859:657), the western by the sale of the mountain portion east of the Continental Divide [648]
by an agreement ratified by Congress in 1896 (U.S. Statutes XXIX, 1897:353). The southern boundary was established by an act of Congress in 1874 (U.S. Statutes XVIII, 1875:28), [175]
and the present eastern border was set by an agreement of sale between the Blackfeet and the United States, ratified by Congress in 1888 (U.S. Statutes XXV, 1889:113).

6: McFee E-4,5 (1959-1967) 1972 NF6 Blackfoot NF6

4

Dependency and Readaptation: 1884-1970

Introduction

175 THE UNSUCCESSFUL HUNTS of 1883–1884 marked the end of the subsistence
224 pattern on which the Blackfeet had built their culture. The Indians scoured
the region for food, and moved in around the agency to ask for help from
175 the agent. In Blackfeet culture those who had food shared it during times of want;
657 the agent supposedly had food and as a leader he was now expected to validate his
status by caring for those who had none. The United States government had
acknowledged responsibility for the Blackfeet in the 1855 and subsequent treaties,
[165] but agency supplies were inadequate to meet famine conditions. Up to ¼ of the
Piegan perished during the winter of 1883–1884 (Ewers 1958:293–294).

The Indians had to find a new and meaningful subsistence base as well as
175 new ways in which to express old values and to maintain prestige and status. At
177 the same time, the government, upon which they were dependent, pressed them
to accept new value and prestige systems, quite different from their traditional ones.

The following historical review of the Blackfeet adaptation and adjust-
128 ment since 1884 includes a statement of the general objectives and attendant values expressed in United States Indian policies of the period, a presentation of the means used to further these aims, and the Blackfeet reactions to them during (a) the period of dependency to 1935, and (b) the period of self-rule under the Indian Reorganization Act from 1935 to the 1960s.

United States Indian Policies

175 The prevalent policy of the period emphasized the eventual "civilization"
648 and assimilation of the Indians, although the means to these ends were often
diverse and inconsistent. There appeared to be general agreement by this time that

the Indian could be civilized most effectively through education and agriculture. The Indian Commissioner, in his report for 1885, made an impassioned plea:

> It requires no seer to foretell or foresee the civilization of the Indian race as a result naturally deducible from a knowledge and practice upon their part of the art of agriculture; . . . those races who are in ignorance of agriculture are also ignorant of almost everything else.
>
> It should be industriously and gravely impressed upon them that they must abandon their tribal relations and take lands in severalty, as the cornerstone of their complete success in agriculture, which means self-support, personal independence, and material thrift.

The Indian, he continued, must be taught to work, to send his children to school, and to seek "material independence" (U.S. Comm. Ind. Affairs 1885:III–V).

Two major themes alternated in ascendancy throughout eighty to ninety years of attempts to achieve this goal for the American Indian:

1. The end could best be accomplished by drastic pragmatic programs intended to produce a quick cure regardless of the expense in individual maladaptation.

2. Progress could only be made slowly through humanitarian programs that would allow for gradual, individual readaptation and assimilation.

The goals, and the two approaches to their implementation are expressed well in the following statements selected from Senate debates over the question of allotting land to individual Indians.

The goal was restated eloquently by Senator George H. Pendleton of Ohio in 1881:

> . . . we must encourage them to industry and self-dependence . . . and we must stimulate within them . . . the idea of home, of family, and of property. These are the very anchorages of civilization; . . . (U.S. Congressional Record XI 1881: 906).

The short term approach was advocated by Senator Henry M. Teller of Colorado in 1886:

> I suggested on a former bill the opening of the country, putting side by side with the Indian farmer of a white farmer; . . . Give to our people, . . . the right to go upon the Indian lands and make, side by side of the Indian farm, a farm tilled by the aggressive and enterprising Anglo-Saxon, and in a little while contact alone will compel these people to accept the civilization that surrounds them on every side (U.S. Congressional Record XVII 1886:1762–1763).

Senator John T. Morgan of Alabama advanced the humanitarian viewpoint:

> The measure which the Senator proposes here must be one of growth. Of course we know that all this western country at some future day must be populated jointly by Indians and white people: but until the Indians get into condition where they can be protected against the white men who would sell them whiskey,

> 175 . . . powder and shot, and out-deal them in all their transactions, it is the duty of the Government of the United States to preserve them in some form or other
> 648 until they have matured sufficiently to become able to control their own domestic affairs, and manage their own property (U.S. Congressional Record XVII 1886: 1764).

These two themes will be seen to alternate in ascendancy in governmental policies from that time to the present. The goal of eventual assimilation has been questioned seriously only in the last forty years. The debate culminated in the passage of the General Allotment Act of 1887 that authorized the President to permit the allotment in severalty of reservation lands to Indians (U.S. Statutes XXIV 1887:388).

The values stressed in that policy are work (industry), self-dependence (self-support), individualism (independence of the tribe), and acquisitiveness (implied in home-building, material thrift, and private ownership). These are some of the qualities valued by the culture-bearing agents of American society who came into long and continuous contact with the members of the Blackfeet tribe. The Americans apparently gave little thought to either the preservation of the Indian value and status systems or to ways in which these might be used to implement governmental policies. The Blackfeet probably thought of the whites as a minority group who had promised to help them and turned to the white man for help with little thought that Indian values were in serious jeopardy.

128 The following review of the history of United States-Blackfeet relations from 1884 to 1970 attempts to trace the interplay between the American and Blackfeet value systems during the course of economic readaptation. The events of history tend to be those seen and recorded by whites, and for many years even the thoughts of the Blackfeet had to find expression through the white man's pen.

The Period of Dependency, 1884–1935

175 1884–1891 Following the winter of 1883–1884 the first efforts of the
657 agents were directed toward relieving the famine and providing for the future sustenance of the people. A new agent made his first report in the fall of 1884 in which he wrote that he found few results of past efforts to make the Blackfeet sedentary and self-supporting farmers (U.S. Comm. Ind. Affairs 1884:106–108). During the next six years the agents attempted to build up the agency farm and herd, to encourage the Indians to raise grain and produce, and to forward other programs of "civilization."

175 From this time on, the dependent Blackfeet were subjected increasingly
177 to the American concepts of law and order. The Indian police, under the agent's direction, were instrumental in eliminating warfare and horse raiding. In 1888
[721] the agent reported that Indian "depredations" had ceased and there had been no horse "stealing" during the preceding year (U.S. Comm. Ind. Affairs 1888:152).
[554] American pressure against war and horse raiding had eliminated two more tradi-
[224] tional avenues to the acquisition of property and prestige; hunting, as a major expression of skill, had already lost its place in Blackfeet life.

In his report of 1888, Agent Baldwin was less optimistic about the agricultural possibilities on the reservation than he had been in previous years (U.S. Comm. Ind. Affairs 1888:150–152). The crops failed in 1889 and 1890, and in 1891 the agent reported that no crops had been planted in the past year either by Indians or by the agency because of fear of further drought (U.S. Comm. Ind. Affairs 1891:265). 175 657

In 1888 the agreement whereby the Blackfeet relinquished claim to the lands to the east of the present reservation boundary was ratified by Congress. In return the United States promised annuities, in the amount of $150,000 for a period of ten years, to be paid in the form of goods and services necessary for Indian progress toward civilization (U.S. Comm. Ind. Affairs 1888:303). 175 648

The first ration of cattle and horses under the agreement was issued in 1890. Agent John Catlin summed up the preceding five years of agricultural endeavor as "commendable," but wrote that the Indians had experienced failure "through no fault of their own." The Indian interest in stock raising led to his recommendation that grazing be given precedence over agriculture in future programs (U.S. Comm. Ind. Affairs 1890:114). Efforts to establish farming as an economic base had met with little success. 175 231 [241]

1892–1905 By 1892 the Piegan herd had been built up to 6,827 head of cattle and 4,616 head of horses. The Indians were moving out over more of the reservation and claiming land in anticipation of eventual allotment. They were beginning to establish herds, build houses and corrals, and to shift the emphasis of cultivation to raising hay for the stock (U.S. Comm. Ind. Affairs 1892:280–281, 807). Each subsequent report emphasized the suitability of the area for stock raising and reported a substantial increase in the Indian herds.

In 1898 a severe winter and a shortage of feed caused a 40 percent loss among the Indian cattle, and the irrigation engineer for the agency recommended extension of the irrigation canals in order to increase hay production (U.S. Comm. Ind. Affairs 1898:187–188). Indian ranchers, however, had a chance to recover from this setback. Additional cattle were included in the annual issues and stock raising continued.

An agreement for the sale of the Rocky Mountain portion of the reservation was approved by the United States government in 1896 (U.S. Statutes XXIX 1897:353). The conditions of the sale assured another ten years of annuities after the obligations under the 1887 treaty had been met. 175 648

By 1904 the agent reported a total of 20,509 head of cattle and 12,000 head of horses owned by the Blackfeet, and claimed that only 10 percent of Indian subsistence had been dependent upon government issues for that fiscal year (U.S. Comm. Ind. Affairs 1904:610–611, 600). Thus in the first two decades of dependency Blackfeet had tried farming and experienced failure. They were then encouraged to try stock raising and had begun to make some economic adaptation as herdsmen. 231 [241]

Their *cultural* readaptation, up to this time, had been less successful than the economic development. The increasing settlement of the lands around the reservation and the efforts of the police, as noted earlier, had ended horse raiding. Christian missions, particularly from the Roman Catholic church, had been 177 [721] [797]

Campbell remained with them until 1929. His program benefited many
people, but others wanted more independence. They wanted to restock and operate 657
their ranches, to continue their own operations with a minimum of governmental
interference (Ewers 1958:322–323). Nevertheless, the Five Year Programs gave 179
many persons a sense of accomplishment and helped carry the Indians through
a period of widespread hard times.

The wholesale granting of competency and fee patents was halted in 1926
when it was recognized that "the lands of a vast majority of Indians who had 425
been given absolute control of their allotments [had] passed from Indian ownership in various ways . . ." (U.S. Comm. Ind. Affairs 1926:10–11).

The cycle of success and failure was not broken by the Five Year Plans,
however. The enthusiasm of both the Indians and the agents died down during 433
the years between 1929 and 1935 and the greater number of the Blackfeet 179
returned to economic dependency (Ewers 1958:323).

In 1933 the Works Progress Administration (W.P.A.) and the Civilian
Conservation Corps (C.C.C.) programs were established to meet national unem- 657
ployment and the benefits were extended to Indian reservations (U.S. Sec't. 433
Interior 1937:218). Like the irrigation construction of earlier years, these programs provided a source of seasonal cash labor, an important prop to the economy, but one that provided little training for permanent employment on the reservation.

At this point in Blackfeet adaptation, new national Indian policies were
being formulated. The Meriam Report, a monumental study of the Indian prob- 648 ●
lems published in 1928, questioned the whole doctrine of assimilation of the Indians.

> He who wishes to merge into the social and economic life of the prevailing civilization of this country should be given all practicable aid and advice in making the necessary adjustments. He who wants to remain an Indian and live according to his old culture should be aided in doing so (Meriam 1928:28).

This, and many other of the recommendations, became official policy with the passage of the Indian Reorganization Act in 1934 (U.S. Statutes XLVIII 1934:984). The act provided, among other things, for the cessation of allotment of Indian land, a limitation on the sale of restricted Indian land to other than tribal members, and the establishment of a revolving loan fund from which Indian corporations could borrow to further either tribal or individual enterprises. Tribes were authorized to organize and to adopt a constitution, and those who organized were given broad powers of self-government previously denied to them. Organized tribes were also empowered to incorporate and manage tribal properties and income. Actions of both the political and business organizations were subject to approval and review by the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

In addition, the traditional cultures were given recognition for the first time. A circular sent to all agencies in 1934 illustrates the sharp reversal from previous communications about Indian cultural practices:

> 648 No interference with Indian religious life or expression will hereafter be tol-
> erated . . . and it is desirable that Indians be bilingual. . . . The Indian arts are
> to be prized, nourished, and honored (U.S. Sec't. Interior 1934:90).

The Indians were to have a choice, and to be allowed to play some part in decisions about their future development.

The Period of Self-Government, 1935–1970

642 The Blackfeet Constitution and the Blackfeet Corporate Charter were
accepted and approved in 1935. The population continued to grow: the report
161 for 1935 lists the membership of the Blackfeet Tribe as 3,962, of which 561
were living outside the reservation jurisdiction (U.S. Sec't. Interior 1935:163).
162 The economy improved slowly after the bad years of the early thirties. The stock-
433 men, in particular, were aided by a provision for a repayment cattle pool author-
ized in 1934 (see U.S. Sec't. Interior 1937:212–213 for repayment in kind program,
231 and 1944:241 for a review of the program). A man could build a herd by borrow-
ing cattle from the pool and repaying in kind from the increase.

The Johnson-O'Malley Act (U.S. Statutes XLVIII 1934:956) passed in
658 1934 and amended in 1936 (U.S. Statutes XLIX 1936:1498) authorized the Sec-
657 retary of the Interior to contract with a state or other political units, and with
schools, colleges, and private corporations for educational and medical services,
871 agricultural assistance, social welfare, and relief for Indians. The Annual Report
for 1934 stated that the Browning schools were assuming the task of educating
the Blackfeet children from that district (U.S. Sec't. Interior 1934:85).

433 The majority of the Blackfeet still were attempting to readapt to the
immediate present, to find success in a new economic endeavor. They were pressed
177 to close a wide cultural gap in a short period of time, and to make things more
difficult, the national economy would not stand still. Ranching and farming were
changing in both production and marketing practices. A writer for the *Montana
Almanac* noted a trend away from subsistence farming in the 1920s as homestead
holdings proved to be too small for efficient farm and ranch operations, especially
with the increasing use of power machinery in subsequent years (1957:202).

433 The Indian's future on small subsistence farms of 80 acres, or on a ranch
using a 360 to 420 acre grazing allotment, was not promising. A successful oper-
231 ation required the use of leased land and adequate capital. The heirship status
241 of individual trust lands made leasing difficult, and trust restrictions inhibited
the mortgaging of such lands. The day of slowly building a ranch or farm from
a cow, some seed, and hard work was disappearing. Few Blackfeet were estab-
lished sufficiently in the 1930s to build and maintain a remunerative enterprise.

From 1936 through 1940 general drought conditions continued in the
region (U.S., Indians at Work IV, 7 1936:37, 8 1936:37–39; Toole 1959:240—
434 for Montana from 1929 to 1939). A few men held onto their farms and ranches,
but most were forced to rely on wages from occasional labor and welfare payments.
735 One report stated that general poverty was the lot of ¾ of the Blackfeet people
in 1936 (U.S., Indians at Work IV, 4, 1936:38).

jobs to make enough to live on, so they took my cattle. Just didn't have enough 241
land for farming or ranching.
—a seasonally employed construction worker, 1/16 Blackfeet. 231

I have about thirty-five head I'm running with family stock on other people's 433
land. These are loan cattle. I've been taking five to ten head a year and haven't
been pressed for payment. Just pay them back when I can. The family helps take 231
care of them. I want to lease some land but I find it hard to do. The Indian gets
priority but somehow it seems hard to get land away from the white lease-holders. 433
—a regularly employed carpenter, 1/4 Blackfeet.

I was raised on a ranch. Before the war I was living and working for my uncle who had cattle. I had some loan cattle and was just getting started. Then I was called into the Army. They *only kept me six months, but no one would take care* of my cattle while I was gone so I turned back the loan cattle and sold the rest. After the war I came to town and worked for wages.
—an irregularly employed laborer, full-blood.

This is the way these men see the problems, and whether or not they are 433
correct in their appraisal is beside the point. The important thing is that, for
various reasons, many men failed to make a go of ranching and farming while
a few others did. The successful ones appear to have had family support. Only
by cooperation, in which some of the family took wage earning jobs while others
tended the ranch, were most enterprises kept going.

The pressure for ending trust status of Indian land culminated in the
adoption of House Concurrent Resolution 108 in 1953 calling for the "earliest 648
possible" termination of federal responsibilities over specified Indian tribes (U.S.
Congr. Record XCIX, 8, 1953:9968). The Blackfeet were not included among
the Indians to be "freed," but the resolution was interpreted as a statement of 425
intent to end rapidly the trust status of all Indians. In response to this resolu- 648
tion, the

> issuance of patents in fee nearly doubled as compared with the previous year . . . while the disposition of allotted holdings through advertised sale more than tripled . . . (U.S. Sec't. Interior 1953:24).

A brief moratorium in effect during 1958 was lifted the following year "in complance with a congressional request. . . ." (U.S. Sec't. Interior 1959:253). The Blackfeet continued to lose reservation land to nonmembers.

While federal and tribal authorities were attempting to increase the indus- 433
trial capacity of the reservation, other forces were working against them. The
population was growing—from the 3,921 resident members in 1941 to 4,850 161
in 1960 to more than 6,000 by 1970. The increasing number of Blackfeet who 162
had left the reservation often included the most educated.[11] The land sales and 167
continued fractionization of allotments through inheritance procedures made land 311
consolidation and utilization increasingly difficult. The trend toward larger farms 471

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[11] This out-migration continues, largely because there are few opportunities on the reserva-
tion for turning learning into income. Weber tried to find a correlation between schooling 464
and income among his Babb sample and concluded that for making money ". . . in a
community with very few jobs other than those demanding physical labor, comparative
youth and vigor are more important than variations in schooling" (1969:16).

> 735 The overall picture is one of widespread economic impoverishment which in the case of many families is shared with emotional impoverishment. As is true among most people who live in chronic poverty, the poor people of the Reservation have a feeling of hopelessness and helplessness in controlling their own destiny (Blackfeet Indian Reservation—City of Browning "Model City" Application 1968: 39–41).

This must be read as a portion of a document requesting economic assistance; nevertheless, the problems are there and the solutions will not appear 657 immediately. The much-maligned councils are working on long-range programs that appear to offer promise of improvement, but they do this in the face of continuous opposition from those tribal members, both on and off the reservation, who want tribal spending *cut and income distributed in per capita payments in-* 643 stead of being invested in industrial developments. The tribal council is severely criticized by its constituents and accused of everything from mismanagement to out-and-out graft. Some of these charges might be true, but I think it is important to note that this is a tribal body, elected by the tribal members, attempting to deal with local problems under the surveillance of local people. In this respect it is much like local governing bodies anywhere else in the United States. I think it is better for the Blackfeet to be at work solving their own problems through their elected representatives than to have these tasks turned over to either private or federal "experts" and all of the accompanying elaborate bureaucracy.

648 Overshadowing these economic and political problems and pervading all decision and debate is the concern about "termination." Termination is sometimes defined as the withdrawal of federal responsibilities for Indians, at other times as terminating the special relationship between the federal government and Indians. Its proponents usually talk about giving the Indians the full rights, privileges, and responsibilities of their citizenship. Usually these words are pronounced with less stress on "responsibilities" than on "rights" and "privileges," because the main responsibility to be gained is that of paying land and income taxes, a responsibility that has been denied the man who kept his land in trust. To most Indians termination signals the abrogation of long-standing treaties and the removal of federal protection from unfriendly and rapacious whites who "really only want to take our land away from us." Land is, perhaps, the one remaining tangible tie to the past, as well as an emotionally loaded symbol of Indian identity. Indians criticize the B.I.A. but resist its abolishment. It is the only remaining defense between them and termination, and when someone says "termination" the Indians hear "extermination."

Summary

128 The emphasis, in this chapter, has been upon the economic problems of Blackfeet readaptation following the depletion of the buffalo. The pressures put upon the people, both directly and indirectly to change other parts of their culture can be summarized now and related to the problem of the maintenance or replacement of the traditional value and prestige systems.

to the development of an increasingly viable and capable group of community 554
leaders. This is my greatest source of optimism. The Blackfeet have never lacked for active and intelligent leaders and they have had years of experience in practical politics. The heartening factor has been the trend to a broader political base, increased autonomy of decision, and the greater participation by more of the community in political and social action. With each passing generation those who have taken leadership roles have had more education and more experience with the outside world than those who preceded them. Tribal members play leading roles in national Indian organizations. They have in the past and continue to [648]
serve in the state legislature and senate. There were Blackfeet at Alcatraz. More youth are going to college and some of these are talking of returning to the [878]
reservation to play a part in solving local problems. The tribal council and its committees has always provided a good training ground for leadership. To this 657
has been added the Community Action Programs and other O.E.O. sponsored activities. The Browning Industrial Development Corporation and the Housing 867
Authority, both provide opportunities for leadership training and participation for more people. Some of the O.E.O. programs are reminiscent of the old C.C.C. programs that provided short range income that was a help for people when they needed it, but had few long range economic benefits. The Community Action Programs, however, appeal to me most because they are involving young and old and most of them are centered in the community. The workers involved get to know their neighbors, learn of the community problems and what resources are available to help solve them. Even youngsters out cleaning up vacant lots are doing something with their neighbors for the community. They are learning about organization and practical politics—knowledge that should stand them in good stead whatever the future brings. The faults of these programs and organizations are the faults of all of us, as are the strengths. The Blackfeet are becoming increasingly able to run their own affairs with less governmental paternalism.

That last sentence raises the very sensitive issue of termination. This is a 648
very sticky problem, too complicated to elaborate on here. I will side with those who oppose it for the following reasons. I agree with those tribal members who fear political domination by the county and state if the Bureau of Indian Affairs and the special relationships between tribe and the federal government were terminated. First, land would be lost rapidly if trust restrictions were removed. It is of course every citizen's right to buy and sell his property, but too many Indian owners still are too inexperienced in financial matters to protect their own interests in even the most honest land transactions or to benefit by converting land to cash. Secondly, much reservation land would be lost if it was removed from trust status and put on the tax rolls at a time when too few Indian owners make enough money from their land to meet taxes. Thirdly, the Indians feel that the present climate of discrimination in off-reservation communities would result in loss of services, poorer services, and unfair treatment in local and state courts is present federal and tribal programs were turned over to county and state. I think their fears are well founded.

The other side of the argument has some merit too. B.I.A. programs have often been overprotective, fostering overdependency and expectations of paternal-

648 istic care and these have created some problems. Some of the hamlets, particularly Heart Butte, are so dependent on tribal and governmental help that the people could not exist there without it. One result of termination would be that the people in Heart Butte would lose their remaining lands and be forced to move. This move would take them into slum areas of Browning or Great Falls, and fully on the welfare rolls of those communities. The new economic base must be secured before the trust protection can be removed.

The Blackfeet complain about the bureau but fear the alternatives more. Some of their leaders think the best move would be to let Indians assume administrative positions in the bureau where they could have more say about what should be done and how to do it. This, they say, "would hold the wolves at bay, while we work out our problems."

Termination is just one more product of the red man's burden—the white 563 man problem. Not only have the white men taken over most of the land, the authority, and decision making powers about Blackfeet life, liberty, and pursuit of happiness, but they have married into the tribe as well. All these influences have produced, among other things, white-oriented tribal members. White people remain a problem on the reservation, some more of a problem than others. The white merchants, ranchers, and farmers, at least, are known; some are good friends. Their roles are familiar and for better or for worse predictable patterns of interaction have been established. White Bureau of Indian Affairs employees usually fit into known patterns too. Their roles are known and people recognize that some will visit with them, become friends and help out in community affairs, while others will remain aloof. Public Health Service employees are less well known. Most, with a few appreciated exceptions, come and go more frequently than do the bureau employees. They tend to remain isolated in their own residential area, and rarely enter into the economic and social life of the community.

177 It has been my experience that white people living around the reservation tend to be more hostile to the Blackfeet than those who live further away. The 186 Blackfeet know, and often dislike, the established relationships in the neighboring off reservation towns. These feelings are unfortunate. People of very similar backgrounds and interests are prevented from establishing what could be very congenial friendships if these attitudes did not prevail. More Blackfeet would find off reservation jobs available if their white neighbors could exercise their biases more selectively. White-oriented tribal members, too, often lose touch with the Indian-oriented, stereotype them and, as a consequence, are branded in return with the white man stereotype.

177 Then there is the white tourist: a whole industry is being planned to attract greater numbers of them and their money to the reservation, yet all tourists are not loved. Too many American tourists do not know what to expect of Indians, or arrive with wrong expectations so firmly fixed that they cannot learn from experience. Too many look for the movie or comic strip Indian, the "noble red man" in buckskins or feathers who says "How" and talks about "bucks" and "squaws" and "papooses," and is considered to be either inordinately wise and taciturn or somewhat short on intelligence. Others seem to expect to find illiterate people living in squalor and filth. They may find some of what they expect. Some Indians dress

mittens, caps, and moccasins to protect their extremities from 237]
the freezing cold. They made shields from the thick hide of the
buffalo's neck and used green rawhide for securely binding stone [291]
clubs, knives, mauls, and berry mashers to wooden handles. From [714]
soft-dressed buffalo skins they fashioned bags to hold their household [283]
goods when they moved camp. They made serviceable [415]
spoons and drinking cups from buffalo horns. The paunch of this
animal made a tight water bucket. Buffalo sinew supplied thread, [283]
bow strings, and cord for binding both stone heads and feathers
to wooden arrow shafts.

Important as the buffalo was in the life of the Blackfeet in 224
dog days, they did not neglect the other natural resources of
their country. Deer, moose, elk, and the smaller mammals provided [262]
a secondary food resource especially welcomed when buffalo
were scarce. The lighter skins of deer were preferable to 237
those of the buffalo for warm-weather clothing. Porcupine quills, [291]
delicately colored with vegetable dyes, probably were folded [294]
and sewn to their favorite garments to make them more handsome.
Wild plants, especially roots in early summer and berries 262
in fall, supplied vegetal foods which brought some variety to
their heavy meat diet. The roots and leaves of many plants were 824
prepared as medicines. 278

Persistent Blackfoot traditions tell of the crude clay cooking
pots made and used by their ancestors.[11] Earth pigments served 323
for face and body paints and for decorating clothing, tipis, and 386
other skin articles. From stone they fashioned tobacco pipes and
painstakingly chipped their sharp cutting tools and weapons— 324
butchering knives, skin-scraping blades, arrow points, and lance
heads. Each man either made his weapons for war and hunting
or he employed a more skillful elderly man to make them for him.

Aged Indians told David Thompson of Blackfoot warfare in 721
dog days. In the early years of the eighteenth century their bitterest
enemies were the Snake or Shoshoni dwelling on the plains [648]
southwest of the Piegan, who were the frontier tribe of the

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[11] John C. Ewers, "The Case for Blackfoot Pottery," *American Anthropologist*, Vol. XLVII, No. 2 (1945), 289–98.

721 Blackfoot Indians. Occasionally both sides mustered large forces 648 of several hundred warriors drawn from a number of hunting bands. They gathered in summer when the food supply was 701 sufficiently plentiful to feed a large encampment and leave a surplus to care for the women, children, and older men while 726 the warriors were away from home. Under a war chief, the Piegan marched toward enemy country. If a sizable enemy war party was encountered, the opposing forces formed long lines facing one another, barely within arrow range. They knelt behind large rawhide shields some three feet in diameter while shooting their arrows at the enemy from their long bows, which came up to their chins. The fighting sometimes continued until darkness brought it to an end. Although warriors carried lances, knives, and clubs, they apparently made no use of these shock weapons unless one side outnumbered the other sufficiently to encourage it to close with the enemy. If the opposing forces were nearly equal, they appeared to be satisfied to fight a defensive action from behind the protection of their shields; in such a battle, casualties were few, and the fighting usually ended in an indecisive stalemate at day's end.[12]

More destructive and probably more typical of warfare in dog days was the surprise attack on a small hunting camp by a su- 727 perior enemy force. In these actions casualties were heavy as the defenders fought desperately for their lives. Sometimes the men were wiped out, their scalps taken as trophies of war, and their children and women led into captivity by the victorious attackers. Captive women and children helped to replace previous losses on the side of the victors. Probably the women were taken as wives by enemy men, and they continued to perform much the same duties they had performed in their own camps, while the children were adopted into the alien tribe.

462 There is no denying it—a Blackfoot woman's life was hard in dog days. Not only did she bear and rear her children, prepare and cook the family meals, dress the hides of buffalo and other animals, make the tipi, the family clothing, and her domestic

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[12] Thompson, *Narrative*, 328–32.

[ca. 1725-1800]

skinned newcomers farther east. At any rate, they were too busy 177
making a living and fighting off the intrusions of neighboring
tribes upon their own hunting grounds to go see for themselves.

The Shoshonis on their southwestern flank were giving them 721
a particularly bad time. About the year 1730, as nearly as can
be determined from the recollections of an aged Indian who 726
confided to David Thompson nearly six decades later, the Shoshonis
surprised their traditional Piegan enemies with a strange 231
new weapon—big, four-footed animals "on which they rode swift 177
as a deer." They "dashed at the Peeagans, and with their stone
Pukamoggan (war clubs) knocked them on the head." In this
unequal conflict the Piegans "lost several of their best men."[2]

Never before had the Blackfoot Indians seen horses. Unable 231
to cope with their enemies' new mobility alone, the Piegans sent
messengers to friendly Cree and Assiniboin camps asking for 177
help. These neighbors not only sent warriors but brought with 648 ●
them a new and equally strange secret weapon—a curious hollow
rod of iron which made a terrifying noise and hurled a tiny 411
missile so swiftly that the human eye could not follow its flight,
and with such force that it could kill or cripple an animal or a 177
man at a distance. The allies brought ten of these newfangled
contraptions, with about thirty rounds of ammunition for each.
The Piegans and their allies marched forth to do battle with the 726
Shoshonis, carrying the new weapons concealed in long leather
cases. Scouts reported a large enemy war party ahead. It outnumbered
their own force. But, fortunately, the Shoshonis were
all afoot.

As was their traditional tactic, the opposing forces formed
long lines facing each other a strong arrow flight apart, hid
behind their large shields, and made ready for battle. Eager to 726
see the effect of the new weapons, the Piegan war chief ordered
his line to advance within about sixty yards of the enemy. The 411
ten Cree and Assiniboin gunmen unsheathed their weapons.
Each held two balls in his mouth and powder in his left hand
ready to reload. Then, lying flat on the ground and waiting for

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[2] Thompson, *Narrative*, 300.

lively animals would have gained their first experience with them 177
in this way. It is much more likely that their first mounts were
obtained in peaceful trade with one of the other tribes to the 231
west who possessed horses before the Blackfeet had any—the [439]
Flatheads, the Kutenais, or even the Nez Percés. Once they
gained some familiarity with horses, they could have secured [121]
more of them by raiding their Shoshoni enemies.

The tribes to the south and west possessed no firearms. Guns 439
could be obtained through trade with Cree or Assiniboin middle-
men who were doing business with the English on Hudson Bay 177
or with French traders from Montreal, who were steadily mov- 411
ing westward out of the forests and on to the plains. In the 1730's
the French established posts on the Assiniboine River, west of
Red River. In the forties they built the first trading posts on the
Saskatchewan. Perhaps this indirect trade in firearms and a few 439
other European-made goods began with a trickle of articles from
Hudson Bay in the 1730's. It was expanded by similar items from
the French posts nearer the Blackfoot country during the next
decade.

In addition to the few guns, Indian middlemen began to sup- 177
ply the Blackfeet with such other useful items as iron arrow-
heads, metal knives, and axes. A Blackfoot tradition claims that 412
the first axeheads their ancestors received were a puzzle to them.
Some men proudly strung them on skin cords and wore them [301]
around their necks as ornaments. If they ever did that the more
sophisticated Cree and Assiniboin traders must have laughed
heartily at their naïveté before showing them the error of their
ways.

By 1748 the French had established posts on the lower Sas- 648 ●
katchewan. The westernmost of these forts was Fort à la Corne,
some fifteen miles east of the forks and only a few days' journey
from the Blackfoot country. Three years later a small party of
Frenchmen was sent westward to build an outlying post, possibly
in the Blackfoot country itself. The location of this Fort La
Jonquière is in doubt. There is even some doubt whether it

● 648 existed. If this fort was established it must have been short-lived.[6]

Whether the Blackfeet first saw them at their downriver posts on the Saskatchewan or in their own country, Frenchmen must [101] have been the first whites these Indians met. A strong indication of this survives in the Blackfoot name for Frenchmen, "Real (or original) Old Man People."

[101] Hudson's Bay Company officials, sitting in their posts on the bay, viewed with increasing alarm the steady progress of their French rivals in pushing trading operations up the Saskatchewan toward the country of the Indians their Cree friends called "ayatchiyiniw," meaning "foreigner or stranger." As early as 1743 they had learned something of these strangers from a young woman of their number whom the Crees had brought to the bay as a slave. The lands of the strangers were described to them as ones blessed with "great plenty of the best and finest furs."[7]

Not until 1754 did the Hudson's Bay Company send one of its men southwestward to try to persuade the strangers to bring their furs to trade with the company at the bay. In June of that year a lone white man, Anthony Hendry, guided by a small group of Cree Indians, left York Factory. They traveled southwestward to the Saskatchewan and then westward over the plains on foot, in search of the fabulous strangers. Hendry's record of distances traveled overland was largely guesswork, and both the directions and distances of his movements west of a point south of present Battleford, Saskatchewan (which he reached early in September), have been differently interpreted by scholars.

[101] We know that Hendry received a friendly reception in a great camp of 200 lodges of "Archithinue Natives" (his name for the "strangers") in mid-October. Other bands soon joined this camp, and its size grew to 322 lodges. The most recent thorough student of Hendry's travels locates this camp about eighteen miles southeast of the present town of Red Deer, Alberta.[8]

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[6] Charles M. MacInnes, *In the Shadow of the Rockies*, 27-28.

[7] James Isham, *James Isham's Observations on Hudson's Bay*: 1743, 113.

[8] James G. MacGregor, *Behold the Shining Mountains*, 147.

To this trader,[A] who had known Indians as travelers on foot or 231
by canoe, nothing in the life of the strangers was quite as fascinating as their use of horses. He called their mounts "fine tractable animals, lively and clean made, about 14 hands high." The Indians picketed their horses with buffalo-skin lines to stakes driven in the ground near their lodges and hobbled them when
turned out to graze. Their riding gear consisted of "hair halters, 492
Buffalo skin pads, & stirrups of the same." Hendry welcomed an
opportunity to accompany a small party on a buffalo hunt. He 224
observed, "They are so expert that with one or two arrows they will drop a buffalo. As for me I had sufficient employ to manage my horse."[9]

Hendry did not identify these people by any name other than 101
"Archithinue Natives," his rendering of the Cree term for the
strangers. Possibly in his time the Crees may have used this [648] ●
general term in speaking not only of the Blackfoot tribes and their Sarsi and Gros Ventre allies, but of the hostile Shoshoni as well, for Hendry said they comprised several tribes at war with one another. He saw enemy scalps displayed on long poles near the Indians' lodges and met boys, girls, and women taken captive from other "Archithinue" tribes.

The white trader wintered on the plains. In spring he started 648
on his long trip back to the bay. On his way down the Saskatchewan he met and visited four camps of "Archithinue" totalling 327 lodges. These may have been the same Indians whom he had
visited the previous fall in the great camp of 322 lodges. At each 648
camp he urged the leaders to send young men with their furs
to trade at the bay. He had made the same plea at the big en- 439
campment in the fall. But the strangers always showed little interest in his proposal. They explained that they lived very well
by hunting buffalo in their own country. They might starve on [501]
that long trip to the bay, for, they pointed out, they were un- [262]
acquainted with canoes and would not eat fish.[10]

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[9] Anthony Hendry, *York Factory to the Blackfeet Country. The Journal of Anthony Hendry, 1754-55*, 338, 350.

[10] *Ibid.*, 338-39, 350-51.

A [i.e., Anthony Hendry in 1754--Analyst]

439 Meanwhile, Hendry noticed that the Assiniboin middlemen, the advance agents of the French on the Saskatchewan, were doing a land office business among the strangers. When he joined a flotilla of sixty canoes for the trip downstream in May, he noted, "There are scarce a Gun, Kettle, Hatchet, or Knife amongst us, [648] having traded them with the Archithinue Natives."[11] Undoubtedly, the shrewd Assiniboin traders had encouraged the strangers to resist Hendry's efforts to lure them to the far-off posts on Hudson Bay. It would have ruined their lucrative business.

648 Interesting as was Hendry's experience among the "Archithinue Natives," his long and courageous journey brought no profit to his company. His failure to give any tribal name or names for the Indians he met in the west leaves their identification in doubt. He may have encountered one of the Blackfoot tribes. It is more probable the Indians were the Gros Ventres, easternmost of the tribes known to the Crees as "strangers," and the first of them likely to have been met by a visitor from farther east.[12] Even so, this earliest white man's account of Indian life on the plains of the upper Saskatchewan is important to our 171 understanding of Indian customs in that region at that time. The daily life of the Blackfeet and Gros Ventres must have been very similar in the middle of the eighteenth century. Hendry's brief descriptions of their use of horses and their hunting, war, and trading activities probably typified either or both peoples' way of life at that time.

648 439 France relinquished her possessions in Canada to England by the Treaty of Paris in 1763. But the withdrawal of the French only served to stimulate competition for the trade of the Indians on the Saskatchewan. Independent traders from Montreal, whom the Hudson's Bay men termed "peddlers," began to move westward, taking with them English-made trade goods which were superior in quality to those previously offered by the French.

Again, in 1772, the Hudson's Bay Company sent a trader to

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[11] *Ibid.*, 351.

[12] Clark Wissler, *Population Changes Among the Northern Plains Indians*, Yale University Publications in Anthropology, No. 1, 5. Wissler was convinced that these Indians were Gros Ventres rather than Blackfeet.

try to persuade the strangers to bring their furs to the bay. 648
Mathew Cocking left York Factory in June for the Saskatchewan. 439
Leaving that river below the forks, he traveled overland until, on the first day of December, he encountered a band of twenty-eight lodges of Indians west of the Eagle Hills. They met at a buffalo pound, which Cocking described: 1771

> It is a circle fenced round with trees laid one upon another, at the foot of an Hill about 7 feet high & an hundred yards in Circumference: the entrance on the Hill-side where the Animals can easily go over; but when in, cannot return: From this entrance small sticks are laid on each side like a fence, in form of an angle extending from the pound; beyond these to about 1½ mile distant Buffalo dung or old roots are laid in Heaps, in the same direction as the fence: These are to frighten the Beasts from deviating from either side.[13]

For two weeks, while they tried to drive buffalo into the pound with little success, Cocking lived with these Indians and tried to persuade them to accompany him to York Factory to trade. They countered with the same arguments given Hendry two decades before, saying "that they would be starved & were unacquainted with Canoes & mentioned the long distance." Cocking was convinced that "they never can be prevailed upon to undertake such journeys."[14] Again the Hudson's Bay Company's drummer returned home without even a promise of trade.

But Cocking had been more observant than Hendry and named the tribes of "Archithinue Natives," stating, "This tribe is named Powestic-Athinuewuck (ie.) Water-fall Indians. There are four Tribes, or Nations more, which are all Equestrian Indians, viz. Mithco-Athinuwuck or Bloody Indians, Koskitow-Wathesitock or Blackfooted Indians, Pegonow or Muddy-Water Indians & Suxxewuck or Wood Country Indians." Thus, in the language of the Cree Indians who accompanied him, he iden- 101

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[13] Mathew Cocking, *An Adventurer from Hudson Bay. Journal of Mathew Cocking from York Factory to the Blackfeet Country, 1772–1773*, 109.

[14] *Ibid.*, 92.

101 tified the five allied tribes of Gros Ventres, Bloods, Blackfeet, Piegans, and Sarsis. Cocking made it clear that the Indians he met at the buffalo pound were Gros Ventres.[15]

721 Cocking learned that these tribes were at war with the Snake
(Shoshoni) Indians farther west. He was shown heavy, sleeve-
714 less jackets of sixfold, quilted moosehide worn by men on both
sides in their battles. He noted that the Gros Ventres cooked
171 their victuals in earthen vessels "much the same in form as New-
castle pots but without feet" and that they raised small plots
of tobacco.[16]

● 648 Mathew Cocking's report of his fruitless negotiations with the
Gros Ventres convinced Hudson's Bay Company officials that it
439 was useless to try to get the tribes of the upper Saskatchewan
to make the long journey to the bay. If they were to compete successfully with the "peddlers" from Montreal they must expand their operations southwestward. In 1774 they took their first important step in this direction by establishing Cumberland House on the lower Saskatchewan, which served as a base for upriver trade. Gradually, Napikwan, in the person of the agents of the great Hudson's Bay Company and competing independent traders from Montreal, moved up the Saskatchewan. By the autumn of 1780 the Hudson's Bay Company had built Buckingham House, 550 miles up river from Cumberland House. Traders had reached the Blackfoot country at last. No doubt they were looking forward optimistically to an extended period of profitable trade—when a great catastrophe robbed them of a host of customers.

721 In the year 1781 the Piegans on Red Deer River sent a scouting party into the country of their traditional enemies, the Shoshonis. The scouts returned, bearing a strange report. They had located a large Shoshoni camp, had watched it carefully from a high knoll, but had seen no activity. Fearing their wily enemies might be luring them into a trap, the Piegan council instructed their scouts to go back and look for other Shoshoni camps in the vicin-

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[15] *Ibid.*, 110–11.
[16] *Ibid.*, 103–11.

ity. Again the scouts returned, saying they had seen no other lodges. At dawn next morning the Piegans attacked the silent village, ripped open the lodge covers with their sharp knives and daggers, and made ready to fall upon their hated enemies. But there was no one to fight back. The occupants of the lodges were all dead or dying. Each was a mass of corruption. 721 726 164

Believing a bad spirit had destroyed their enemies, the Piegans collected the best of their lodges, camp equipment, and horses and returned home. Two days later the deadly smallpox broke out in their camp. It spread from lodge to lodge. The Indians were helpless in the face of this strange plague. They had no idea that one person could communicate a disease to another. Their medicine men had no cure for it. Frantic, infected men rushed into the river and died. More than half the people perished before the plague was spent. Those who remained to cry and mourn for the dead concluded that the Good Spirit had forsaken them. In their desperation they sacrificed feathers, branches of trees, and sweetgrass to the Bad Spirit, imploring it to leave them alone. [757] 755

Humbled by the plague, the Piegans considered making peace with the Shoshonis, little knowing that their enemies had suffered even more severe losses in the epidemic. Indeed, the weakened Shoshonis withdrew southward, leaving the rich Bow River country to the Blackfeet.[17] 648 ●

For two or three years the Blackfeet were at peace. Then the occupants of five lodges who had separated from a Piegan band to hunt mountain sheep on the upper Bow River failed to return. A searching party found their bodies and, near them—in the form of snake heads painted on sticks—the unmistakable evidence that they had been massacred by the Shoshonis. This deed rekindled Piegan hatred for their old enemy. Yet in their war council they decided to temper their revenge with practical action. They would kill Shoshoni warriors. But they would capture and adopt their women and children in order to regain their numbers lost in the great plague.[18] 721

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[17] Thompson, *Narrative*, 336-38.

[18] *Ibid.*, 338-40.

721 [411 [439 648 Relentlessly, the Blackfeet turned upon the Shoshonis on the south and upon the latter's allies, the Flatheads and Kutenais, who stood between the Blackfoot tribes and the Rockies. These enemies, armed only with primitive bows and arrows and lances, were no match for the Blackfeet, whose guns now were fed with a ready supply of shot and powder obtained from white traders in their own country. By the end of the century the Blackfeet had become masters of the northwestern plains, from the North Saskatchewan River southward to the northern tributaries of the Missouri and from Battle River eastward to the Rockies. The haughty Piegans talked of their old Shoshoni enemies as miserable old women whom they could kill with sticks and stones.[19]

727 The Shoshonis must have suffered terrible losses in their losing fight with the Blackfeet. In 1805, a French trader, François Larocque, found twelve lodges of Shoshonis living with the Crow Indians on the Yellowstone. He identified them as the remnant of one of their "tribes" that had been destroyed.[20] But the greater number of the Shoshonis retreated westward, crossing the Rockies to avoid the relentless attacks of their old enemies.

The Flatheads and Kutenais also sought to avoid extermination by seeking safety west of the mountains. In 1811 empty Kutenai lodges were still standing near Rocky Mountain House, mute reminders of the tribe's former residence on the plains.[21] Twenty-two years later a middle-aged Flathead recalled the hectic days of his youth when his courageous people, unable to defend themselves against repeated attacks by the better-armed Blackfeet, decided to leave the plains to find peace behind the Rocky Mountain barrier.[22]

648 439 While the Blackfeet were aggressively expanding their territory to the south and west, white traders were actively contending for their friendship on the Saskatchewan. In 1779 a group of independent traders in Montreal organized the North West Company to enable them to compete more successfully with the

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[19] Henry and Thompson, *New Light*, II, 726.

[20] *Journal of Larocque from the Assiniboine to the Yellowstone*, 73.

[21] Henry and Thompson, *New Light*, II, 707.

[22] W. A. Ferris, *Life in the Rocky Mountains*, 91–92.

[ca. 1800]

powerful Hudson's Bay Company in the western trade. By 1784 they were offering stiff competition in the Blackfoot country. 648 They more than held their own in attracting the Blood and Blackfoot tribes. 439 But when their rivals sent David Thompson to winter among the Piegans on Bow River in 1787, the Hudson's Bay Company gained the favor of that largest of the Blackfoot tribes. Not until the Nor'Westers built Rocky Mountain House far up the Saskatchewan at the mouth of the Clearwater in 1799 did they begin to get a goodly share of the Piegan trade.

For their mutual protection against the host of warlike Indians on and near the Saskatchewan the rival companies commonly 648 built their trading posts within sight of each other in strong defensive positions on the river bluffs. These posts were in truth forts. Each fort comprised a cluster of buildings constructed of heavy logs in the traditional post-in-sill style long favored by the French in Eastern Canada. These buildings were surrounded by a stout stockade, and the fort was defended with cannon. In the winter of 1809 the North West Company's Fort Vermilion, one of the most important posts on the Saskatchewan at that time, housed the factor in charge, 35 employees, most of them French-Canadians, and their Indian wives and mixed-blood children. They totaled 130 persons, living in ten houses and two tents within the stockade.[23] At that time there probably were fewer than 200 white men in all of the traders' forts in the Blackfoot country. These forts were the first white men's homes the Blackfoot Indians had ever seen. Naturally they called them "Old Man Person's Lodges."

Trading with Napikwan involved a long and tedious ritual 648 each time a hunting band approached one of the forts. First the band chief sent several of his young men ahead to announce 439 the arrival of his party and to obtain a few small presents—some powder, tobacco, and face paint. When they returned and all had dressed in their best clothes and painted their faces to their own satisfaction, the chief led his men to the fort. Within a few yards of the gate the Indians discharged their guns in the air

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[23] Henry and Thompson, *New Light*, II, 553-55.

[ca. 1800]

● 648 as a token of friendship. The traders replied by raising a flag
and firing a few guns. On entering the trading house, the Indians
439 were disarmed, formally seated on the floor in order of rank, and
served a few drams of rum and some tobacco. Pipes were lighted
and slowly passed around while the news was told at great length.
When the women had erected the Indians' lodges near the fort,
the traders gave out enough rum to permit the whole camp to
enjoy a prolonged drinking spree. Not until the Indians sobered
up, perhaps the next morning, perhaps a full day later, did they
bring their goods into the fort to begin the trade.[24]

If the traders anticipated a rich harvest of beaver in the Black-
224 foot trade, they were soon disillusioned. There were plenty of
beaver in the creeks and rivers. A good hunter could have killed
a hundred of them a month with his bow and arrows. But, with
the exception of one small band of Piegans who lived near the
mountains and may not have owned many horses with which
to hunt buffalo on the plains, the Blackfeet were generally not
[825] beaver hunters. To some the beaver was a sacred animal. Others
found alibis for not hunting beaver, such as "the ground was
[439] too hard for their hands to work in."[25] Their trade in small-animal
pelts consisted primarily of wolves and foxes, which they caught
in snares or deep pits. The animals jumped into the pits to get the
buffalo meat bait left by the Indians and could not get out again.

On the other hand, the Blackfeet loved to hunt buffalo on
horseback, and could kill many more of these animals than they
439 needed for their subsistence during their fall hunts. They offered
quantities of fresh meat, dried meat, and pemmican to the
traders. Consequently, the Blackfoot trade became primarily a
source of provisions for the fur traders who could use this food
while they were engaged in their more lucrative quest for beaver
among the Indians north of the Saskatchewan.

The Blackfoot tribes also supplied horses to the traders cheap-

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[24] This ritual was enacted at Fort George in 1794 and at Rocky Mountain House sixteen years later in much the same way. Duncan M'Gillivray, *The Journal of Duncan M'Gillivray of the Northwest Company at Fort George on the Saskatchewan, 1794-1795*, 30; Henry and Thompson, *New Light*, II, 728-31.

[25] Henry and Thompson, *New Light*, II, 724.

[ca. 1800]

pipe is the only recognizable ritual to which they referred. 778
Thompson remarked upon the great length of these pipestems, 276
some three or four feet long, and noted that they were carried on the backs of their owners with care when camp was moved. Henry learned of the Blackfoot tradition that the medicine pipe was given to the people by Thunder.

Alexander Henry was told that when a Blackfoot Indian died, 775
his spirit traveled to a great hummock between Red Deer River and the South Saskatchewan. There it ascended into the air and proceeded southward "to a delightful country, well stocked with horses, buffalo, and women and there lives happy to all eternity, making pounds, chasing buffalo, and enjoying handsome women."[45]

Henry regarded the Blackfoot tribes as "the most independent and happy people of all the tribes E. of the Rocky mountains. 181
War, women, horses and buffalo are their delights, and all these they have at command."[46]

Strong and warlike as the Blackfoot tribes were, the traders 648 ●
had little to fear from them as long as they gave fair return for furs, horses, and provisions in such coveted wonders as guns and "white man's water." The Indians knew the traders were too few in number to offer a threat to their security. During the 1780's the Blackfoot tribes were uniformly friendly to the white businessmen in their country. In the early nineties, however, their Gros Ventre allies, living on the plains between the South Saskatchewan and the Missouri, twice destroyed Hudson's Bay Company posts. In 1811, believing the traders were discriminating against them, the Gros Ventres proposed an attack upon Rocky Mountain House. When the Piegans learned of this plan they nipped it in the bud by warning the Gros Ventres in no uncertain terms that if they carried out their threat against the traders, they would have to fight them too. The traders themselves had roused the resentment of the Piegans by sending arms

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[45] *Ibid.*, II, 527–29; Thompson, *Narrative*, 366.
[46] Henry and Thompson, *New Light*, II, 737.

[TEXT CONTINUED ON PAGE 44]

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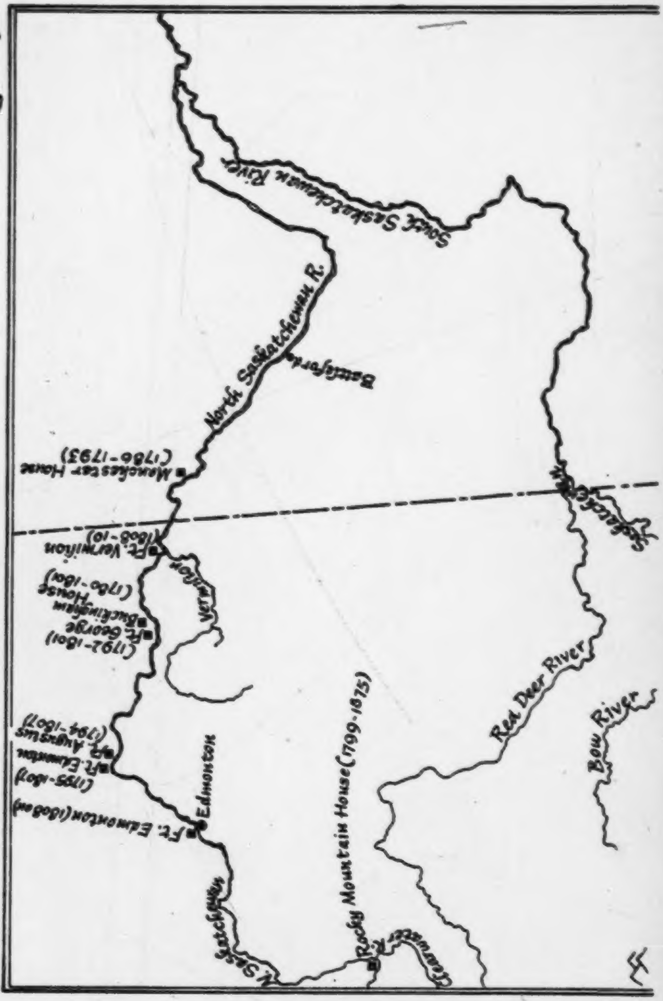
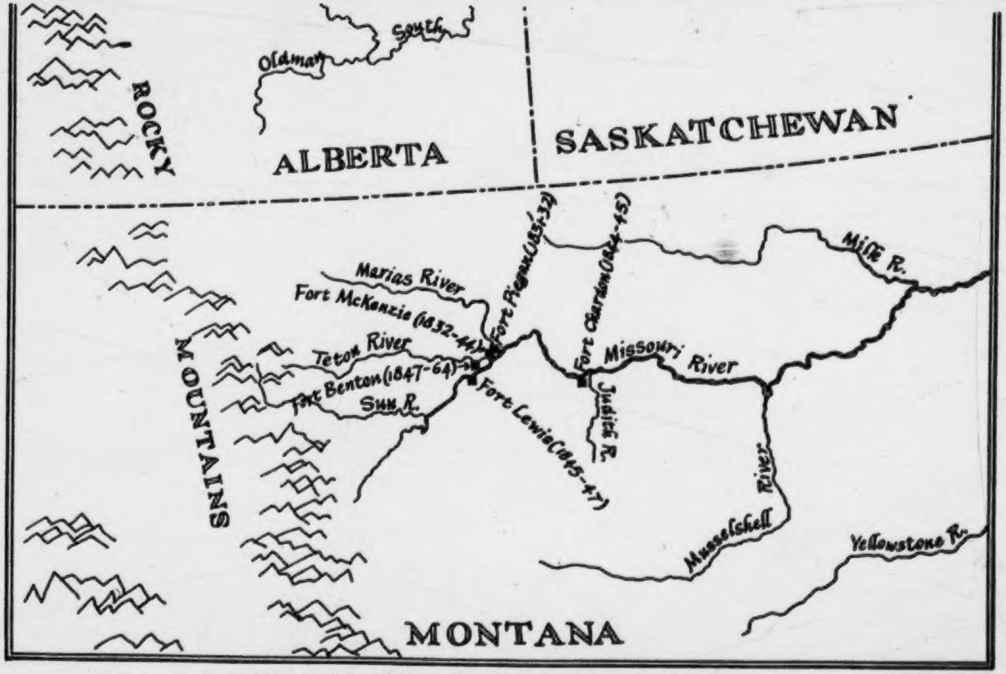

South Saskatchewan River
North Saskatchewan R.
Battleford
Manchester House (1786-1793)
Ft. Vermilion (1808-10)
Vermilion
Buckingham House (1780-1801)
Ft. George (1792-1801)
Ft. Augustus (1794-1807)
Ft. Edmonton (1795-1807)
Ft. Edmonton (1808 on)
Edmonton
N. Saskatchewan
Rocky Mountain House (1799-1875)
Clearwater R.
Red Deer River
Bow River
Saskatchewan

[p.42]

[p.43]


Oldman
South
ROCKY
MOUNTAINS
ALBERTA
SASKATCHEWAN
Marias River
Fort McKenzie (1832-44)
Fort Piegan (1831-32)
Fort Chardon (1844-45)
Milk R.
Teton River
Missouri River
Fort Benton (1847-64)
Sun R.
Fort Lewis (1845-47)
Judith R.
Musselshell River
Yellowstone R.
MONTANA

Fur-Trading Posts in the Blackfoot Country, 1780–1858

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● 648 over the Rockies to the old enemies of the Blackfoot tribes.
But the Piegans still could boast that they had never murdered
a Canadian trader.[47]

177 The Piegans must have realized how they had prospered since
the traders came among them. Their lives had become infinitely
177 richer than those of their stone-age great-grandfathers. Part of
their prosperity resulted from their acquisition of swift horses
231 from neighboring tribes. Horses greatly eased their daily tasks
of obtaining food and skins and of moving camps, and enabled
177 them to accumulate more possessions. Part of their prosperity
was due to the improved weapons, tools, and utensils obtained
411 from the traders. Some of the traders' wares replaced items the
412 Indians formerly made for themselves with time-consuming care.
415 Metal knives, files, and awls enabled them to fashion articles of
rawhide, soft skin, stone, and wood quicker than they could have
177 made them with stone and bone tools. The Indians gained more
leisure. They could devote more time to warfare, to accumulating
[721 wealth in horses through raids on enemy camps, to prolonged
[796 religious ceremonies, to social gatherings, and to feasting. They
[574 grew strong and confident as they extended their conquests and
expanded their territory. Neighboring Indians and whites alike
648 recognized them as the dominant military power on the northwestern plains. Woe to those who incited their hostility!

At the same time Napikwan had gained a precarious foothold
648 in the Blackfoot country. His wonders were subtly undermining
177 the Indians' vaunted independence, even as the Blackfeet boasted of their power and prowess. The Indians were becoming more
and more dependent upon him as they came to regard as necessities those traders' wares which they could not make themselves.

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[47] *Ibid.*, II, 719–23.

[ca. 1800-1850]

3: Big Knives on the Missouri

THE BLACKFOOT tribes' friendly relations with British and Canadian traders on the Saskatchewan in the early years of their 648 acquaintance were in sharp contrast to their aggressive hostility toward American explorers and traders whom they met in the valley of the Missouri River during the first three decades of the nineteenth century. These Indians soon learned to distinguish between their old friends, "the Northern White Men," [101] and their new enemies, the Americans, whom they called "Big Knives." The latter name may refer to the sharp, dangerous hunting knives carried by the Americans.

Blackfoot hostility toward the Americans began with their very first meeting, three summers after formal ceremonies were held in St. Louis transferring Upper Louisiana, a huge unexplored area including the drainage basin of the Missouri River, to the United States on March 10, 1804. Two months later Captains Meriwether Lewis and William Clark started up the Missouri on their epoch-making journey of discovery. Their party wintered near the Mandan villages in present North Dakota. The following spring they continued westward, following the Missouri across the plains of present Montana to the Rocky Mountains. On this portion of their trek to the Pacific the leaders were apprehensive of meeting the warlike Gros Ventres, whom they knew as the Minnetarees of the Plains. Their worries were solidly grounded. The Gros Ventres had a reputation for treachery among Canadian traders, and they made long journeys southward, crossing and recrossing the Missouri on their raids against the Crow Indians on the Yellowstone. We know that in the fall of 1805 Gros Ventre warriors were far south of the Missouri, attempting to make an expedient peace with their Crow enemies in order to obtain some fine horses in trade.[1]

From the mouth of the Musselshell River westward to beyond the mouth of Sun River the Lewis and Clark party frequently sighted and occasionally spent the night in rude lodges of poles and bark, built as temporary shelters by passing Indian war parties among the trees bordering the Missouri. The explorers thought some of these war lodges did not "seem to have been long evacuated."[2] Between the Musselshell and the Marias they passed "the remains of a vast many mangled carcasses of Buffalo which had been driven over a precipice of 120 feet by the Indians & perished; the water appeared to have washed away a part of this immence pile of slaughter and still there remained the fragments of at least a hundred carcasses. They created a horrid stench."[3] Indian signs were plentiful, and the party proceeded cautiously. Nevertheless, they crossed the Montana plains without meeting a single Indian, either friendly or hostile.

On the return eastward from the Pacific in 1806 the party divided into two groups for further exploration of the Montana plains. While Clark led one group down the Yellowstone, Lewis, with nine men, followed a more northerly course down the Missouri. In mid-July Captain Lewis, accompanied by three enlisted men, left the rest of his small party on the Missouri and headed northward to try to determine the sources of the Marias River, which he believed marked the northwestern boundary of the Louisiana Purchase and hence the northwestern limit of the United States. They traveled on horseback as far north as Cutbank Creek on the present Blackfeet Reservation. There Lewis attempted to make observations, with but limited success on account of cloudy and rainy weather.

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[1] Larocque, *Journal*, 44.

[2] Meriwether Lewis and William Clark, *Original Journals of the Lewis and Clark Expedition, 1804–1806*, II, 80–249.

[3] *Ibid.*, II, 94.

8: Ewers E,G-4,5 (1941-1951) 1971 NF6 Blackfoot NF6

[ca. 1800-1850]

On July 25, Lewis was convinced that the sources of the Marias 648 were to the west rather than farther north. Fearing further delay would unnecessarily slow the eastward progress of his party, he turned south. Besides, two of his men returned with the disturbing news that they had seen a great number of Indian campsites near the forks of the Marias which appeared to have been occupied scarcely six weeks before. Lewis frankly recorded in his journal: "We consider ourselves extremely fortunate not having met with these people."[4]

Their luck was too good to last. Next afternoon Lewis ascended a hill at a point some four miles below the junction of Two Medicine River and Badger Creek to view the country. Instead he saw a party of Indians. To Lewis "this was a very unpleasant site," but since the Indians had seen him too, he "resolved to make the best of our situation and to approach them in a friendly manner."[5]

Cautiously, eight Indians came forward and shook the hands of the equally cautious whites. Although his party was outnumbered two to one, Lewis had little choice but to camp with the Indians in the river valley that night. During the evening he smoked with the Indians and conversed with them through his accomplished sign talker, George Drouillard. Solemnly, with tongue in cheek, Lewis proclaimed that he had "come in surch of them in order to prevail upon them to be at peace with their neighbors . . . and to engage them to come and trade with me when the establishment is made at the entrance of this river." Not to be outdone by Lewis' diplomacy, these Piegan Indians readily assented to his apparent insistence that they were Gros Ventres. They claimed there were three chiefs in their party and declared their desire for peace with the Flatheads.

Fearful that the Indians might try to steal his horses during 721 the night, Lewis posted a guard before he went to sleep. Shortly after daylight he was roused by the sharp voice of Drouillard, shouting, "Damn you. Let go my gun." George was struggling

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[4] *Ibid.*, V, 216.

[5] *Ibid.*, V, 219.

8: Ewers E,G-4,5 (1941-1951) 1971 NF6 Blackfoot NF6

[ca. 1800-1850]

721 with one of the red men for possession of his weapon. J. Fields had carelessly laid his gun behind him while on guard, and one of the watchful Indians had seized the opportunity to take it and the gun of his sleeping brother. The Fields brothers ran after the Indian, overtook him, and Reuben Fields stabbed him in the heart. The Indian ran about fifteen yards and fell dead.

Foiled in their attempt to disarm the whites, the Indians then tried to run off their horses. In the ensuing melee Lewis wounded one of the red men with a shot through the belly before the Indians rode away, leaving behind some of their own horses and weapons as well as their dead comrade. Lewis placed a medal such as he had been accustomed to give friendly Indian leaders upon the body of the dead Piegan. Then, fearing their late adversaries might soon return with reinforcements, the four whites beat a hasty retreat southward to rendezvous with the rest of their party at the mouth of the Marias next day. There they lost little time abandoning their horses, taking to their canoes, and paddling rapidly downstream toward civilization.[6]

In spite of Lewis' identification of the Indians in this scrap as Gros Ventres, there need no longer be any doubt that they were Piegans. The knowledgeable contemporary Canadian trader, David Thompson, so identified them, and years later the Piegans recalled both the fight and the name of their tribesman killed in the action, He-that-looks-at-the-Calf.[7]

● 648 If this unfortunate run-in with Lewis and his men hardened the hearts of Blackfeet toward Americans, subsequent events greatly aggravated that attitude. Even before Lewis and Clark returned to St. Louis, the rich, unexploited beaver country west of the Missouri-Yellowstone junction began to prove a magnetic attraction to adventurous white men. At the Mandan villages in mid-August, John Colter, one of the ablest hunters of the Lewis and Clark party, asked and received permission of the captains to join two young men from Illinois on a hunting and trapping expedition to the Yellowstone Valley. The following spring, while 648 paddling his fur down river to market, Colter met a party of forty men en route to the Yellowstone under the leadership of Manuel Lisa, the most daring St. Louis trader of his day. George Drouillard, veteran of the Lewis and Clark expedition, was among them. Probably he helped Lisa persuade his old comrade-in-arms to join the party.

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[6] *Ibid.*, V, 218-28.

[7] Thompson, *Narrative*, 375; James H. Bradley, "The Bradley Manuscript," Montana Historical Society *Contributions*, Vol. VIII (1917), 135. (Hereafter referred to as Bradley, "Manuscript," *MHSC*.)

Guided by the experienced Colter, they followed the Yellowstone to the country of the Crow Indians, enemies of the Blackfeet and Gros Ventres. At the mouth of the Bighorn they built a small post, Fort Remon, and opened peaceful trade with the Crows. Lisa sent the experienced Colter with two Crow guides to explore westward. On Shoshone River this little party was [121] attacked by "Blackfeet." Colter's companions deserted him. Alone and in the dead of winter he traversed the wonderland that is now Yellowstone National Park and returned downriver to Lisa's fort.

The next spring Colter, in company with John Potts, another veteran of the Lewis and Clark expedition, boldly set out for the Missouri headwaters to trap beaver. Fearing the Blackfeet, they worked by night and hid during the day. Early one morning [121] they were surprised by several hundred of the dread "Blackfeet." The Indians killed Potts and captured Colter. For this old 127 enemy they devised a special torture. They stripped him naked and gave him a short start in a race for life. Colter's chances were probably less than one in a hundred. Yet, running like a scared antelope, he outdistanced the pursuing red men, jumped into a near-by stream, swam a short distance, and concealed himself so well in the underbrush that the Indians could not find him. Almost miraculously, this naked, unarmed man found his way back to the fort at the mouth of the Bighorn.[8]

Colter escaped with his own skin, but he left behind all his valuable beaver pelts. This rich booty helped salve the Indians' keen disappointment at his escape. It provided them with a [439]

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[8] Hiram M. Chittenden, *The American Fur Trade of the Far West* (2nd ed.), II, 708–709.

[ca. 1800-1850]

727 439 supply of fine furs for which their trader friends on the Saskatchewan would give them more ammunition and plenty of that wonderful "white man's water."[9]

648 Lisa's early success on the Yellowstone and the rosy prospect of exploiting the still richer fur resources of the Missouri headwaters farther west encouraged the formation of a large fur-trading company in St. Louis. This Missouri Fur Company was backed by such prominent citizens as the Chouteaus and William Clark. In the spring of 1810 Lisa was again trading with the friendly Crow Indians on the Yellowstone, while two of his partners in the new firm, Andrew Henry and Pierre Menard, led a party westward to the Three Forks of the Missouri. There, on a tongue of land between the Jefferson and Madison rivers, they built a fort. They had high hopes of obtaining three hundred packs of beaver that year from the small streams in the vicinity, but they reckoned without the aggressive opposition of the Blackfeet. [721] So constant were the Indian attacks that little trapping could be done. That spring the Indians killed more than twenty trappers. Many of the remaining whites were ready to call it quits, so Menard returned to the fort at the mouth of the Bighorn, accompanied by the faint-hearted majority, and sent the paltry twenty to thirty packs of beaver taken from the Missouri headwaters downstream to St. Louis. By autumn Lisa and Menard decided to take most of the equipment from the Bighorn post and go back to St. Louis.

Henry, with a few brave followers, stayed on at the little fort until fall. Then, convinced of the impossibility of successful beaver trapping in the face of relentless Blackfoot opposition, he led his little party over the Rockies and built Fort Henry on the North Fork of Snake River. That winter, by trapping and trading with peaceful Shoshoni Indians, Henry collected barely forty packs of beaver. The new location proved a disappointment. The following spring Henry decided to give up and return to St. Louis. En route down the Yellowstone he passed the deserted post at the mouth of the Bighorn and dismantled it.[10]

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[9] Henry and Thompson, *New Light*, II, 539-40.

[ca. 1800-1850]

So the Missouri Fur Company, after a year of discouragement 648 ●
in fine beaver country, abandoned the Montana region. The furs were there, all right, but the Blackfeet were too much for them. Thus the Blackfeet won their first round with the American fur traders. Perhaps the trappers had underestimated the courage and determination of their Blackfoot adversaries. If so they paid for their miscalculation with the blood of their men. On the other hand, the Blackfeet purchased their victory at a heavy price. Many good men had fallen victim to the trappers' guns. But the Blackfeet remained in possession of the field.

The American trappers had never become well enough acquainted 175
with their opponents to identify them by tribe. To
them the Indian raiders were all "Blackfeet." So there is doubt 127
as to which or how many of these tribes were involved in these 721
incessant attacks. At Rocky Mountain House on the Saskatchewan
in the winter of 1810–11, Alexander Henry learned of both 721
Blood and Gros Ventre depredations against the Americans in preceding months. The booty they brought to the post furnished ample proof of their attacks on whites. From one raid the Blood Indians brought beaver traps, knives, dirks, clothing, and even some bank notes signed by the New Jersey and Trenton Banking Company. Henry understood that the Indians had murdered and probably butchered and ate an American officer or trader to avenge the death of several red men at his hands.

On another raid the Gros Ventres murdered members of a
party of free traders and robbed them of their beaver pelts, 171
utensils, and a big black dog which Henry purchased from them for a fathom of tobacco and a scalping knife.[11]

The Northern Blackfeet and Piegans may have been too absorbed 648
in combating their Indian enemies to take much part in
the raids on the Americans. The Northern Blackfeet bore the 721
brunt of increasing hostile pressures from both Crees and Assiniboins moving westward up the Saskatchewan. The over-moun-

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[10] Chittenden, *American Fur Trade of the Far West*, I, 127–44; Bradley, "Manuscript," *MHSC*, Vol. VIII, 188–90.

[11] Henry and Thompson, *New Light*, II, 735–36.

648 tain tribes were making trouble for the Piegans. For years those
[721] tribes had sought firearms with which to defend themselves
against the Blackfeet while they journeyed to the plains on
seasonal buffalo hunts. As early as 1795 the Kutenais tried to
bribe the Blackfeet with payments of horses to let them visit Fort
George on the Saskatchewan to trade. But their old enemies
recognized this Kutenai plan to obtain firearms for use against
them and would not fall for the scheme.[12]

In the first decade of the nineteenth century the Blackfoot barrier to the arming of the tribes west of the Rockies began to lose its effectiveness. Crow Indian intermediaries obtained large numbers of guns at the Mandan and Hidatsa villages on the Missouri and traded some of them to the Shoshonis and Flatheads farther west. Lewis and Clark found a few guns in the possession of the Shoshonis in 1805. That year the Nez Percés sent a small delegation to the distant Mandan villages and procured six of the precious firearms.[13] Trade guns began to reach the Kutenais and Flatheads through direct exchange with Canadian traders after David Thompson and Finan McDonald built posts among them in 1808 and 1809.

By the summer of 1810 the Flatheads owned some twenty
guns. In mid-July they boldly crossed the Rockies to hunt buffalo
721 on the plains. Near the eastern base of the Rockies they were
attacked by a superior Piegan force. In the ensuing battle the
727 Flatheads made good use of their new weapons. Not only did
they defend themselves successfully, but they killed some sixteen
Piegan aggressors. This first defeat at the hands of their formerly
helpless Flathead opponents was bitter medicine to the proud
Piegans. They attributed it to the perversity of their old friends
the Canadian traders, who supplied guns and ammunition to
648 their enemies. That fall they tried to prevent the passage of
firearms over the mountains by patrolling the approaches to the
Rockies west of Rocky Mountain House. Their vigilance forced

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[12] M'Gillivray, *Journal*, 58.

[13] John C. Ewers, "The Indian Trade of the Upper Missouri before Lewis and Clark: An Interpretation," Missouri Historical Society *Bulletin*, Vol. X, No. 4 (1954), 445.

David Thompson to make a roundabout crossing of the Rockies at the head of Athabaska River, far to the north of the Blackfoot country. But the Flatheads continued to receive supplies of the coveted weapons.[14]

Withdrawal of the American traders in 1811 left Blackfoot warriors free to concentrate upon their Indian enemies for a full decade. The western tribes were banding together to form large-scale hunting expeditions to the plains. The Crees and Assiniboins were moving in from the east; the Crows on the Yellowstone sent war parties northward. Surrounded by enemies, the Blackfoot tribes and their Gros Ventre allies were fully occupied during this period in defending themselves, their horses, and their hunting grounds from hostile Indians. Fortunately, they did not have to fight large numbers of trappers too.

So great was American respect for the power of the Blackfoot warriors that overland parties of traders were willing to detour to the south on their way to or from the Pacific slope, rather than risk combat with these rough-and-ready redskins. In 1811, Wilson Price Hunt, outward bound from St. Louis to the Pacific Northwest, left the Missouri at the Arikara villages rather than chance the old Lewis and Clark route up the Missouri. The following year Robert Stuart's party, traveling eastward from Astoria, carefully picked a route which was "out of the walks of the Blackfoot Indians, who are very numerous and inimical to whites." In so doing they discovered that most famous of overland migration routes, the Oregon Trail.[15]

Not until 1821 did a reorganized Missouri Fur Company extend its operations into the country of the dread Blackfeet. Again its leaders chose to establish an operating base among the friendly Crow Indians on the Yellowstone, building a new fort on the site of Lisa's post at the mouth of the Bighorn. Again they sent an expedition farther west. Robert Jones and Michael Immell led a party of trappers up the Yellowstone in the early spring.

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[14] Thompson, *Narrative*, 423-25; Henry and Thompson, *New Light*, II, 643-52, 715.

[15] Robert Stuart, *On the Oregon Trail: Robert Stuart's Journey of Discovery (1812-1813)*, 94.

648 In the streams at the head of that river they obtained a fine collection of beaver pelts. On their return downstream in mid-May they encountered some thirty-eight "Blackfeet" who professed to be friendly. It appeared that Immell's long experience in dealing with Indians and his impressive size, physical strength, and courage might be winning the friendship of the American traders'
721 old foes. Then, fifteen days later, while the trappers were riding single file through a narrow pass, some three hundred to four
727 hundred warriors descended upon them. Powerful Immell was cut to pieces. Jones' breast was pierced with arrows. Five other whites were killed and four were wounded. The Indians carried off at least $15,000 worth of property.

648 News of this disaster caused Joshua Pilcher, new head of the
727 Missouri Fur Company, to lament, "The flower of my business is gone." Again that company abandoned operations in present-day Montana.[16]

648 Next, the newly formed Rocky Mountain Fur Company entered the field. Andrew Henry built a temporary post at the mouth of the Yellowstone in 1822. The following spring he led
[721] a party of trappers up the Missouri. He should have known better. Near the Great Falls they were attacked by the ubiquitous "Blackfeet," and four men were killed before the trappers retreated back downstream. By fall the "Blackfeet" and Assiniboins had stolen so many horses from the little post at the mouth of the Yellowstone that the location was abandoned. Again the traders sought the greater security of the Crow country and built a post at the mouth of the Bighorn.[17]

On the western side of the Rockies, in present-day Wyoming, the Rocky Mountain Fur Company adopted a different system of collecting furs. Instead of building trading posts, they began in 1825 to hold an annual spring rendezvous to which itinerant white trappers and friendly Indians brought the furs they had collected in widely scattered operations during the previous win-

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[16] Bradley, "Manuscript," *MHSC*, Vol. II, 226-27, Vol. IX, 129; Chittenden, *American Fur Trade of the Far West*, I, 148-51.

[17] Chittenden, *American Fur Trade of the Far West*, I, 261-71.

ter, exchanging them for supplies and trade goods transported 648
from St. Louis up the Platte and over the Rockies. These great annual fairs, held in Shoshoni country, also attracted the Crows, Flatheads, Nez Percés, and other over-mountain tribes—all longtime enemies of the Blackfeet. Blackfoot warriors knew this trade strengthened their Indian foes. They came to regard the white trappers of that mountainous region with a special hatred. Not only were they robbing Indian lands of their fur resources, but they were giving aid and comfort to the enemy.

Through the remaining years of the twenties and in the thirties, 721
war parties of Blackfeet and Gros Ventres ranged far and wide on both sides of the Rockies south of the Three Forks. Repeatedly, they attacked the mountain men in their isolated camps or on the trail. The hardy trappers stood their ground. In numerous small-scale actions, many lives were lost on both sides. In 1837, Alfred Jacob Miller reckoned the beaver trappers' losses averaged forty or fifty men a season.[18] Blackfoot losses may have been even greater.

West of the Rockies, in the valley of the Missouri and southward, the Blackfeet made no distinctions among beaver trappers. Hudson's Bay Company men who moved eastward from the upper Columbia, American company men, or free trappers—they were all enemies. In 1832, George Catlin met a free trapper at Fort Union who had made seven expeditions westward. Five times the Blackfeet had robbed him of his furs, horses, and equipment. He considered himself lucky to have escaped with his life, and he was ready to call it quits.[19]

In those days American trappers blamed the British traders for inciting "Blackfeet" raids upon their Big Knife rivals. Whether the "Northern White Men" on the Saskatchewan actively encouraged this guerrilla warfare against their business rivals south of the border may be open to question; that they profited by it is certain. Valuable beaver pelts were carried northward as booty 439
by the Blackfoot raiders, and the Canadian trading forts were

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[18] *The West of Alfred Jacob Miller*, 148.

[19] George Catlin, *Letters and Notes on the Manners, Customs and Condition of the North American Indians*, I, 74.

439 also the armories from which Blackfoot warriors obtained their firearms and ammunition. They were also the dispensers of that marvelous stimulant to trade, "white men's water."

● 648 For a quarter of a century after Captain Lewis' initial meeting with the Piegans the Americans failed to make peace with the Blackfeet. When peace did come it was negotiated by two former "Northern White Men" who had become "Big Knives." Kenneth McKenzie was a canny Scot who participated for many years in the Canadian fur trade before entering the service of the American Fur Company. In 1828 he built a trading post on the Missouri at the mouth of the Yellowstone, in the country of the Assiniboins, enemies of the Blackfeet. McKenzie began at once to lure the border tribes away from Hudson's Bay Company traders. He was successful in bringing the southern bands of Assiniboins and Plains Crees and the Plains Ojibwas to his post. But he well knew that the real prize was the Blackfoot trade. The Blackfoot country was richer in valuable furs than that of the other tribes. McKenzie was determined that his company should gain a share of the Blackfoot trade. But how?

Among the men at Fort Union there was a seasoned old trader who had served some twenty-one years in the Canadian fur trade, a goodly part of it with the Hudson's Bay Company in the Blackfoot country. This man, Jacob Berger, spoke the Blackfoot language. He had known many of their important chiefs. McKenzie persuaded him to try to bring a party of Blackfeet to Fort Union. At the head of a small party of other courageous men, and carrying an American flag, Berger left the fort in the fall or early winter of 1830. So little faith did many of the men at Fort Union have in this expedition that they dubbed it "the forlorn hope."

Accounts of this journey differ in detail. According to the fullest one, the party proceeded up the Missouri to the mouth of the Marias, followed the Marias to Badger Creek, and went up Badger Creek to its head, without finding the Blackfeet. There, within a few miles of the site where Captain Lewis had fought the small group of Piegans a quarter-century before, Berger encamped and raised the Stars and Stripes. At daybreak the next morning a passing Piegan party discovered the camp. Some 648 of its members wanted to attack and destroy the white intruders. But an old warrior, Pretty Woman, pointed to the flag as a symbol of the white man's peaceful intentions. He prevailed upon his comrades to receive these strangers as friends.

Berger calmly explained his mission to the Indian warriors in their own tongue and induced them to guide him to their village. At the winter encampment he persuaded about one hundred Piegans to accompany him to Fort Union to meet his great chief. Upon their arrival McKenzie welcomed the Indians with liberal presents and promised to build a trading post in their country the following fall.[20]

McKenzie succeeded in establishing peaceful relations with 648 the warlike Piegans because he offered them a real Indian trade. The Indians themselves would collect the furs and barter them 439 at the posts of his company. This adoption of the Canadian system by the Big Knives won the approval of the Indians. The Blackfoot chiefs told Major Sanford, Indian agent for the Upper Missouri tribes, "If you will send Traders into our Country we will protect them & treat them well; but for Trappers—Never."[21]

In the fall of 1831, Kenneth McKenzie sent James Kipp with forty-four men and a large keelboat loaded with trade goods up the Missouri. On the north bank of that river, at the mouth of the Marias, they set to work building the first American post in the Blackfoot country. The day after work began several hundred lodges of Piegans arrived, eager to open trade. With some difficulty Kipp persuaded them to withdraw, promising that the fort would be finished and ready for trade in seventy-five days. Promptly on the seventy-fifth day the Indians were back. They were astonished to find a completed fort—three large log buildings for quarters, stockhouses, and a trading room, surrounded

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[20] Bradley, "Manuscript," *MHSC*, Vol. III, 202–203; Charles Larpenteur, *Forty Years a Fur Trader on the Upper Missouri*, I, 109–15; James Stuart, "Adventures on the Upper Missouri," Montana Historical Society *Contributions*, I, 84–85.

[21] François Chardon, *Chardon's Journal at Fort Clark, 1834–1839*, 253.

● 648 439 by a stockade twenty-five feet high, with loopholes for cannon and small arms. Kipp named it Fort Piegan, in honor of the first Blackfoot tribe to make peace with the Americans.

Kipp realized that if he was to win the trade of these Indians away from the Hudson's Bay Company, he had to demonstrate clearly his greater liberality. From a barrel of whisky he made two hundred gallons of Blackfoot rum and distributed it among the Indians. Never before had they seen "white men's water" flow so freely. For three days the entire Indian camp enjoyed a beautiful binge. When they sobered up, they beseiged the fort with their peltries. They were overjoyed to find that Kipp offered them considerably more goods in return for their furs than did their old friends, the "Northern White Men." In a few days Kipp obtained 6,450 pounds of beaver from which his company realized $46,000 the next spring.

721 During the winter a large force of Blood Indians besieged the fort, intent on destroying it and taking the furs that had 726 been traded by the Piegans. For eleven days Kipp held his fire, hoping to conciliate the attackers and secure their trade. Then, with his supply of water nearly exhausted, Kipp charged a four-pound cannon heavily with grape-shot and fired it at a huge cottonwood tree growing near the fort. The thunder of this discharge and the shower of broken limbs and splintered wood that rained down from the tree frightened the Indians so that they fled in every direction.

727 Shortly thereafter two Blood chiefs came to the fort. They blamed Hudson's Bay Company agents for talking them into attacking Kipp's post. Clever Kipp reminded them that he had withheld his fire and convinced them of his good intentions. 429 Then the Blood Indians brought him some three thousand buffalo robes which the Canadian traders would not take because they were too heavy for them to transport with profit.

648 When spring arrived and Kipp prepared to take the first winter's returns downriver, only two or three of his men (who had taken Indian wives) were willing to remain at the isolated post among the dread Blackfeet. Those men were too few to man

the fort during the summer, so Kipp dismantled it before setting
out for Fort Union in his loaded keelboat. Soon after the traders' 648
departure, Blood or Assiniboin Indians burned Fort Piegan.[22]

In the fall of 1831 McKenzie negotiated a formal peace between the Blackfeet and the Assiniboins. The following summer Bull's Back Fat, head chief of the Blood Indians, and other prominent Blackfeet visited Fort Union. It was a memorable season, marked by the arrival of the first steamboat to make the long journey upriver from St. Louis. One of its passengers was the
self-taught artist and Indian enthusiast, George Catlin. Catlin 648
painted the earliest known portraits of Blackfoot Indians at Fort 175
Union that summer. Thirteen in number, these portraits include
likenesses of old Bull's Back Fat and his wife and grandchild. Catlin was greatly impressed by Eagle Ribs, a war leader who "stands here in the fort and deliberately boasts of eight scalps, which he says he has taken from the heads of trappers and traders
with his own hand." Eagle Ribs was no idle boaster. That very 721
fall he was sent westward from Fort Union with letters for Henry
Vandenburgh, a principal clerk of the American Fur Company. While approaching the whites near Jefferson River, just east of the Rockies, Eagle Ribs' party was mistaken for hostile Indians
and was fired upon. In the ensuing battle Vandenburgh was 727
killed, his body stripped of flesh, and his bones thrown in the
river. Eagle Ribs, the efficient killer, brought Vandenburgh's pistols back to Fort Union.[23]

Catlin's portraits reveal that some basic changes had taken 178
place in Blackfoot dress since the days of Alexander Henry
twenty years earlier. Men were wearing breechclouts. Women 291
were wearing skin dresses with full, elbow-length sleeves. These [294]
dresses were tastefully embroidered with narrow bands of blue
trade beads.

George Catlin's comments on the Blackfeet undoubtedly re- 175
flect the opinions of his trader informants at Fort Union in the

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[22] Bradley, "Manuscript," *MHSC*, Vol. VIII, 244–50.

[23] Catlin, *Letters and Notes*, I, 39; James Carnegie (Earl of Southesk), *Saskatchewan and the Rocky Mountains*, 160–61.

175 summer of 1832. He called the Blackfeet "perhaps, the most powerful tribe of Indians on the Continent," who, "having been less traded with, and less seen by white men than most other
175 tribes, are more imperfectly understood." Catlin estimated the Northern Blackfeet at 450 lodges, the Bloods at 450 lodges, the
161 Piegans at 500 lodges, and the Small Robes (who were actually
162 a large Piegan band) at 250 lodges, giving a total of 1,650 lodges, or (averaging 10 persons to a lodge) 16,500 persons. This figure is lower than Prince Maximilian's estimate of 18,000 to 20,000 persons made the following year.[24]

648 While Catlin was at Fort Union, McKenzie sent David Mitchell, a clerk of the American Fur Company, upriver to re-establish a trading post among the Blackfeet. Six miles above the mouth of the Marias, Mitchell's men built a new quadrangular fort some forty-seven paces on a side. It was defended by two blockhouses and several pieces of cannon. In honor of his superior, Mitchell named the new post Fort McKenzie.[25]

When Mitchell returned upriver in the summer of 1833, he was accompanied by the famous German scientist, Prince Maximilian zu Wied, and the latter's artist companion, Carl Bodmer. The keelboat trip from Fort Union to Fort McKenzie required thirty-four days. En route they passed the mouth of Milk River, then considered the western boundary of the Assiniboin tribe and the eastern boundary of the allied Blackfoot and Gros Ventre tribes. At the mouth of Arrow River they found some 260 lodges, housing practically the entire Gros Ventre tribe which, two years before had destroyed a Canadian trading post, killing nineteen persons, and which had fought a bitter battle with American traders in Pierre's Hole (present Wyoming) in July, 1832. As Mitchell's keelboat approached, the crew could see the American flag flying on a high pole near the principal chief's lodge. Yet so treacherous were the Gros Ventres considered that the traders were relieved when they got by their village without trouble.[26]

[24] Catlin, *Letters and Notes*, I, 59-60; Maximilian, *Travels*, II, 95.

[25] Maximilian, *Travels*, II, 91-92; Bradley, "Manuscript," *MHSC*, III, 204-206.

Maximilian and Bodmer spent more than a month at Fort
McKenzie, in the heart of the Blackfoot country. During this 648
period (August 9–September 14, 1833) all three Blackfoot tribes 175
came in to trade. While Bodmer was busy making excellent [439]
water color portraits of many of the most influential chiefs and
drawing a panoramic view of the great camp of the Piegans, the
Prince recorded his observations of Blackfoot customs and of
the conduct of the trade at Fort McKenzie.

Mitchell was making definite progress wooing the Blackfoot
trade away from the Hudson's Bay Company. At the conclusion 648
of a feast given by the Northern Blackfoot chief Iron Shirt, that 439
leader gave Mitchell the scarlet uniform with blue facings and
yellow lace which he had received from the "Northern White
Men." Later Mitchell gave the Piegan leader, Bear Chief, a handsome
uniform, a red felt hat ornamented with feathers, and a
new double-barreled percussion gun, to let the other chiefs see
"how the American Fur Company distinguished its faithful
friends."

Prince Maximilian was the first white observer to describe the
Blackfoot men's societies. He named seven of these fraternities 175
and noted that they were age-graded. That is, young men pur- 575
chased membership in the Mosquito Society and gradually pro- [561]
gressed through the other societies to the Bull Society of elderly
men. Each society had its peculiar regalia, songs, and dances.
All societies except the Mosquitos and Bulls assumed responsibilities
for keeping order in the camp. He also witnessed and
briefly described the dramatic reinactment of the driving of
buffalo into a pound by the colorfully garbed members of the
Women's Society.

Maximilian was disappointed in the information he obtained
about Blackfoot religion, explaining, "Mr. Berger the interpreter, 175
who was otherwise well acquainted with the Blackfoot Indians, 771
could not give me any information respecting their religious 776
ideas, further than that they worship the sun."[27]

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[26] Maximilian, *Travels*, II, 46, 71–76.
[27] *Ibid.*, 112–17, 122.

guns at it; the women and children beat it with clubs, and pelted 175
it with stones, the furey of the latter was particularly directed
against the privy parts." The Prince wanted to obtain the dead 727
man's skull for his collection, but "before I could obtain my wish,
not a trace of the head was to be seen."

After the battle, the Piegans returned to the fort seeking treatment for their wounded. They took Mitchell by the hand and "welcomed him as their friend and ally." Old Bear Chief bragged that "no ball had touched him; doubtless because Mr. Bodmer had taken his portrait a few days before."[28]

On the basis of his own eyewitness recollections of this battle, 175
Carl Bodmer made a very realistic drawing of the attack on the
small Piegan camp outside Fort McKenzie on that morning of 726
August 28, 1833. It depicts vividly the ferocity of the action and [411]
the variety of weapons employed—bows and arrows, trade guns,
and several types of knives and war clubs.

This battle brought to an end the Piegan-Assiniboin peace Mc- 648 ●
Kenzie had negotiated at Fort Union less than two years before.
But the assistance Mitchell and his men gave to the Piegans in 727
the fight further cemented their friendship with the Big Knife
traders. Fearing the defection of the Piegans, the Hudson's Bay 648
Company had built Piegan Post on Bow River that very summer.
They hoped its more southerly location would attract the Piegans and prevent the more northerly Blackfoot tribes from carrying their furs south to trade with the Americans on the Missouri. But the Canadians abandoned this post after five months' trial because of the restlessness of the Indians and the necessity for hauling goods overland from the Bow to the North Saskatchewan. So the Hudson's Bay Company traders returned to old Rocky Mountain House.[29]

Although the Hudson's Bay Company had absorbed its rival 648
North West Company in 1821 and held a monopoly of the Indian
trade on the Canadian plains, geography favored its American 439
rivals. The "Northern White Men" relied upon canoes to carry

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[28] *Ibid.*, II, 146-53.

[29] MacInnes, *In the Shadow of the Rockies*, 41.

648 their furs eastward. They confined their trade primarily to the
finer furs. It did not pay for them to take heavy buffalo robes of
439 little value on their long canoe trips. The Americans, on the other
hand, found the broad Missouri River an open highway down
which they could transport large boatloads of bulky buffalo robes
as well as the more precious furs. They knew the Blackfeet were
indifferent beaver hunters but would provide large numbers of
[436] buffalo robes. As the demand for beaver declined markedly after
the invention of the silk hat in the early thirties, trade in buffalo
robes increased, and the buffalo robe became the standard of
value in the Blackfoot trade with the Big Knives. In 1834-35
the winter's trade at Fort McKenzie amounted to 9,000 buffalo
robes and only 1,020 beaver pelts, together with 40 of otter,
2,800 muskrat, 180 wolves, 200 red foxes, 1,500 prairie dogs,
19 bears, and 390 buffalo tongues.[30]

For fourteen years the American Fur Company traded with the Northern Blackfeet and Blood Indians as well as with their old friends, the Piegans, at Fort McKenzie. During this period only four of their men were killed by the Indians, and they may have deserved their fate because of their own misconduct.[31]

131 Establishment of regular trading relationships with the Big
Knives on the Missouri encouraged a southward shift of the
167 Blackfoot tribes, especially the Piegans. According to Alexander
Culbertson, a trader who knew them well, the Piegans usually
summered near the Three Forks of the Missouri and wintered on
Sun River. They ranged over the intervening country, frequently
[162] visiting the Prickly Pear Valley east of present-day Helena. They
numbered 550 lodges. At that time the Blood Indians (some 500
lodges) and the Northern Blackfeet (500 lodges) usually wintered north of the international line on Belly River and summered
on the Saskatchewan.[32]

787 In the year 1833 a brilliant display of falling stars and a total

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821 [30] Larpenteur, *Forty Years a Fur Trader*, I, 79.

[31] Anne McDonnell (ed.), "The Fort Benton Journal, 1854-1855 and Fort Sarpy Journal, 1855-1856," Montana Historical Society *Contributions*, Vol. X, 300. (Hereafter referred to as McDonnell, "Fort Benton Journal," *MHSC*.)

[32] Bradley, "Manuscript," *MHSC*, Vol. VIII, 153.

[ca. 1800-1850]

164 165 "The Grave Yard." Before the plague abated some six thousand persons, or nearly two-thirds of the entire Blackfoot population, succumbed. Old people who had survived the smallpox epidemic of 1781 generally weathered this one. Many of the strong, impatient young men who would not heed Culbertson's warnings were victims. Nevertheless, unlike the Mandans farther down the Missouri, who were the hardest hit of all the Northern Plains tribes, Blackfoot survivors did not blame the whites for their misfortune.[34]

[582] 161 Culbertson claimed that following this epidemic and the dispersal of the Indians into different bands, knowledge of relationships sometimes was lost to the young, so that marriages took place between first cousins and even brothers and sisters. Yet so rapidly did the Blackfeet recover population-wise that seventeen years after the terrific loss Edwin T. Denig, an intelligent and experienced trader, estimated their numbers were only one-third less than they had been before the smallpox epidemic.[35]

439 The volume of Indian trade at Fort McKenzie continued to increase. In the winter after the smallpox epidemic ten thousand buffalo robes were traded. Robes belonging to victims of the plague may have been included in this number. The trade steadily increased to about twenty-one thousand robes by 1841. Stimulated by desire for the white man's attractive trade goods, Indian hunters were killing more buffalo and their womenfolk were dressing more robes for market.[36]

721 [648] Blackfoot relations with American traders remained friendly until 1844. That January a passing war party requested and was refused admittance to Fort McKenzie. Incensed by this treatment, the red warriors killed a pig belonging to the fort. When men from the fort pursued the Indians, the Blackfeet ambushed and killed one of their number. Vowing vengeance, François Chardon and Alexander Harvey loaded the fort cannon with

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[34] *Ibid.*, Vol. III, 221–26; Chardon, *Journal*, 394–95.

[35] Bradley, "Manuscript," *MHSC*, Vol. III, 232–33; Denig, "Indian Tribes of the Upper Missouri," Bureau of American Ethnology, *Forty-sixth Annual Report*, 625.

[36] Bradley, "Manuscript," *MHSC*, Vol. III, 226, 233.

about 150 lead bullets, aimed it at the approach to the main gate, 721 and waited for the next Indian trading party. In mid-February a large band of Piegans brought robes to trade. When they assembled in front of the gate to await admittance, Harvey fired the cannon, killing ten or more of the Indians and wounding many others, among them women and children. The fort gates were opened and some members of the garrison rushed out upon the panic-stricken Piegans. Several of the wounded were overtaken and killed. After the remaining Indians dispersed, the whites scalped the fallen, some thirty victims, and celebrated with a scalp dance in the fort that night.[37]

This unwarranted cruelty on the part of the vengeful traders 727 made Fort McKenzie untenable. Chardon secretly built a small new post downstream at the mouth of the Judith, burned Fort 648 McKenzie, and moved to the new location, which was named after him. But Chardon's revenge virtually killed the Blackfoot [439] trade. Instead of peaceful trading parties, hostile Indian groups stalked the neighborhood, killing horses and cattle belonging to 721 the fort and occasionally murdering a member of the garrison who dared to expose himself to the Indians' fire. Not only was Fort Chardon virtually in a state of siege, but Blackfoot hostility was extended to Fort Union, where two men were killed and horses driven off.[38]

The following summer the American Fur Company sent one 648 of its most able leaders upriver to try to recover their Blackfoot 439 trade. Alexander Culbertson had had more than a decade of successful experience in fair dealing with these Indians. He was married to a woman from one of the most prominent Blood Indian families. Culbertson abandoned Fort Chardon and built a new post on the south side of the Missouri, about three miles upriver from the present Fort Benton. He named it Fort Lewis in honor of Captain Meriwether Lewis, leader of the first Americans to meet Blackfoot Indians four decades before. Culbertson

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[37] *Ibid.*, Vol. III, 235-37; Paul Kane, *Wanderings of an Artist Among the Indians of North America*, 296-98.

[38] Bradley, "Manuscript," *MHSC*, Vol. III, 237-38.

● 648 diplomatically sent presents and tobacco, at the same time invit-
ing the chiefs of the Blackfoot tribes to come to Fort Lewis to
439 trade. His efforts bore fruit, and a brisk trade resulted. In 1846
the Indians brought to Fort Lewis some twenty-one thousand
buffalo robes, in addition to beaver, wolf, and fox skins.[39]

648 At the request of the Indians, who wished to camp in the well-timbered valley of the Teton while trading at the fort and who sometimes found crossing the ice-filled Missouri impossible in the spring, Culbertson in the spring of 1847 moved Fort Lewis to a site three miles downriver on the north bank. There, 6 miles above the mouth of the Teton and 2,415 miles up the Missouri from St. Louis, was located Fort Clay, soon to be renamed Fort Benton and destined to become the most important trading center in Montana. It was a quadrangular structure with bastions at the alternate angles. Inside the fort were the chief factor's house, the homes of his crew, the storage and warehouses, and a corral. When Governor Isaac I. Stevens visited Fort Benton in the summer of 1853, he described it as "smaller than Fort Union. Its front is made of wood, and the other sides of adobe or unburned brick. It usually contains about a dozen men and the families of several of them."[40]

In the forties the American Fur Company had competition
from other companies for the Blackfoot trade. Fort Cotton, oper-
ated by Fox Livingstone and Company, opened for business on
the site of old Fort Lewis in 1842, but its life was short. Fort
Campbell was built by Harvey, Primeau and Company a short
648 distance above Fort Benton in 1846. In the winter of 1856 trade
was so good that Fort Benton obtained more than fifteen hundred
439 packs of buffalo robes and disposed of most of its desirable trade
goods before the end of February. That year the opposition post
also did a good business, and the rival traders were on friendly
terms.[41]

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[39] *Ibid.*, Vol. III, 242-44.

[40] *Ibid.*, Vol. III, 151-52, 243-44; Stevens, "Isaac I. Stevens' Narrative of 1853-1855," in *Pacific Railroad Report of Exploration*, XII, 102 (Hereafter referred to as Stevens, "Narrative," *PRR*.)

[41] McDonnell, "Fort Benton Journal," *MHSC*, Vol. X, 64-70.

[ca. 1850]

7: Raiding for Horses and Scalps

648 721 THE BLACKFOOT TRIBES were at the height of their power in the middle of the nineteenth century. Their Indian enemies and the white fur traders knew them as the most formidable and warlike people on the northwestern plains. Edwin T. Denig, able trader at Fort Union, who knew all of the tribes of the region, called the Blackfeet "the most numerous and bloodthirsty nation on the upper Missouri."[1] Certainly they were the most aggressive.

721 Their theater of warfare was a vast area which included the valley of the Saskatchewan and the upper tributaries of the Columbia, as well as the upper Missouri. Of the surrounding tribes, only the Sarsis and Gros Ventres, their lesser allies, were safe from Blackfoot attacks. They raided eastward down the Saskatchewan into Cree country and down the Missouri past the mouth of Milk River into Assiniboin country. They raided southward into the land of the Crow Indians beyond the Yellowstone. Blackfoot war parties crossed the Rockies to attack the Flatheads, Pend d'Oreilles, Kutenais, and Shoshonis in their own country.

In 1854, James Doty learned that Blackfoot war parties frequently raided the Shoshonis "by way of a pass on or near the headwaters of the Yellowstone River. The Blackfeet seem to entertain an inveterate hostility toward the Snakes and it is difficult to say how far removed these Indians must be to prevent the

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[1] *Indian Tribes of the Upper Missouri*, B.A.E., *46th Ann. Rept.*, 470.

10: Black Robe Medicine Men

THE LARGEST of the Piegan bands prior to 1846 was the Small 621
Robes. Indians of this band kept to themselves and seldom met with the other bands of their tribe. George Catlin and Father De Smet even considered the Small Robes a separate Blackfoot tribe.[1] Before the great smallpox epidemic in 1837, this band [162]
may have numbered as many as 150 lodges, of which about half survived that great plague. The Small Robes usually hunted near the Three Forks and south of the Missouri. This was the country visited by the Flatheads when they crossed the Rockies on periodic buffalo-hunting excursions. The strong and independent 648
Small Robes dared to make friends with the little Flathead tribe, enemies of the other Piegan bands. They hunted with the Flatheads on the plains and occasionally journeyed over the mountains to visit and trade with them in their Bitterroot Valley homes. At these times they sent scouts ahead to inform the Flatheads of the approach of a friendly party.

Probably the Small Robes were the first Blackfoot Indians to 171
find out that the Flatheads were acting very strangely. They 747
were reciting peculiar prayers in an odd language. They were making peculiar signs, crossing themselves in front of their chests. They were setting aside one day in every seven as a rest day, on which hunting, fishing, trading, and moving camp were forbidden. Each seventh morning the Flatheads assembled to listen to a moral talk by Old Ignace Lamoose, an elderly Iro-

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[1] Catlin, *Letters and Notes*, I, 52; De Smet, *Life, Letters and Travels*, III, 949.

Father De Smet recognized that the continuous state of war between the Flatheads and the Blackfeet was a threat to the survival of the much smaller Flathead group and an impediment to the civilization of both Indian peoples. He was delighted by an opportunity to arrange a peaceful meeting of these warring Indians in the fall of 1848. That summer Chief Victor led his Flathead tribe to the plains to hunt buffalo. There they were joined by twelve lodges of Small Robes. While on this hunt they encountered and defeated a superior force of Crow Indians. The Small Robes fought valiantly to revenge the recent massacre of their kinsmen. But after the battle they attributed the victory to the prayers of their Flathead comrades. They begged Father De Smet to let them become his followers and presented all their children to him for baptism.[10]

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Flushed with success, the Flatheads met the host of Blackfeet in the great camp of Big Lake, Piegan chief. During the ensuing peace council, Chief Victor spoke of his achievements in war, modestly attributing his successes to the assistance and protection of the Black Robe's God.[11] His recent victory over the Crow Indians was confirmed by the Small Robes. The words of this small, middle-aged man must have made a strong impression on the many stalwart Blackfoot warriors who listened to them.

On September 15, Father De Smet held mass in the Piegan camp, where more than two thousand lodges were assembled, including Piegans, Bloods, Northern Blackfeet, and Gros Ventres of the Plains, and Flatheads and Nez Percés from west of the Rockies. The next day he composed a chant for the Piegans which he had translated into the Blackfoot language:

God Almighty;
Piegans are all his children
He is going to help us on earth;
If you are good, he will save your soul.

From a Blood Indian leader De Smet learned that there were

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[10] De Smet, *Life, Letters and Travels*, II, 574–80.

[11] *Ibid.*, II, 593.

11: Travelers Far Afield

648 FOR FORTY-SEVEN YEARS after the Lewis and Clark expedition, no official government exploring party entered the Blackfoot country. One could almost count on his fingers the number of white men, other than fur traders and trappers, who set foot on Blackfoot hunting grounds in that interval of nearly a half-century. None of them were soldiers or settlers.

484 Nevertheless, despite the isolation of their homeland from the
westward movement of white settlers, it would be a mistake to
assume that the Blackfeet remained ignorant of the world beyond their own hunting grounds and the territory their war
parties traversed in their raids against neighboring tribes. Time
and again prior to 1850, small parties of adventurous Blackfoot
Indians journeyed far beyond the camps of their neighbors to
177 more distant regions. In their travels they learned much about
the extent and character of the western country and the customs
of alien tribes. Long before their own country was invaded by
white settlers, they learned of the Spanish settlements in the
Southwest, of the Santa Fé trade, and of the growing numbers
of white-topped emigrant trains that passed up the valley of
the Platte River, over the Rockies, and on to Oregon, California,
and Utah.

484 As early as 1787, David Thompson was told of a large Piegan
war party which traveled southward in search of the Shoshonis.
177 Finding no enemy and being unwilling to return home empty
handed, they continued southward near the eastern base of the

Rockies until their scouts brought word of a long file of horses 484
and mules led by "Black Men" (Spaniards). The Piegan warriors
prepared to fight the white men, but the Spaniards, fearing to 177
risk a battle with such an imposing force, rode off, leaving their
loaded pack animals. The Indians threw the bags of white stones
(silver) from the backs of the horses and mules and drove the
animals home. Thompson, who was the most able geographer 484
among the fur traders of his time, estimated that this contact
with the Spanish miners was made at about 32 degrees north latitude,
which would have been nearly fifteen hundred miles south
of the Piegan party's home camp near present Edmonton.[1] A
trek of this distance by a primitive Blackfoot war party seems
almost incredible. Nevertheless, it was only the first of a number
of long Blackfoot journeys southward that have been recorded.

About the year 1825 a group of Blackfoot warriors joined the 721
Gros Ventres in attacking and plundering Chesterfield House, a
Hudson's Bay Company trading post on the South Saskatchewan 648
near the mouth of Red Deer River. Fearing the traders' revenge,
eighteen or twenty Blackfeet joined their Gros Ventre allies in 727
flight southward to the Arapahoes and Cheyennes near the Black 484
Hills. There the Blackfoot warriors boasted of their skill as horse
thieves. To prove their prowess, they continued southward, stole
horses from the Kiowas and Comanches on Red River, and returned 484
to the Arapaho and Cheyenne camps. Their descriptions
of the fine buffalo country south of the Platte and of the large
herds of wild horses they had seen there encouraged part of the
Cheyennes and Arapahoes to move southward. Their Gros Ventre 484
friends and the little group of Blackfoot adventurers went
with them.[2] 648

This explains the strange presence of Gros Ventre and Blackfoot warriors on the Arkansas, about eight hundred miles south of their usual hunting grounds, where they were encountered

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[1] Thompson, *Narrative*, 370.

[2] George Bent letters to George E. Hyde. I am indebted to Mr. Hyde, of Omaha, Nebraska, for copies of Bent's statements regarding the Blackfoot Indians who found refuge among his people, the Cheyennes.

484 by the David Jackson and William Sublette trading party en route to Santa Fé in the summer of 1831.[3]

● 648 Four years later, Colonel Henry Dodge, leader of a dragoon expedition ordered to the plains to impress the wild tribes with the strength of the United States, met the Cheyennes and Arapahoes in council at Bent's Fort on the Arkansas. Dodge noted that Gros Ventres were present and "also a small band of the Blackfeet proper, consisting of about fifty, who live with the Cheyenne and Arapahos."[4] Probably this number included the Cheyenne and Arapaho wives and children of the group of Blackfeet who moved south a decade earlier. Whether any of these Blackfoot Indians returned to their northern homeland, we do not know. They may have been content to remain in their adopted country. Perhaps they were represented in the ten lodges of Blood Indians living among the Arapahoes whom Alexander Culbertson met at the Fort Laramie Treaty Council in 1851. "They were unknown to him, and he did not learn how long they had been there or whether they ever returned."[5]

Both the Blood and Piegan Indians have a tradition of a party who journeyed south to the Arapahoes prior to 1850 and did come back. Piegan members of this group brought back the
[177] "Southern Gros Ventre" (Arapaho) medicine pipe. Tradition says they also returned with the "big rock" painted tipi and other sacred objects given them by the Arapahoes.[6]

484 In 1854, James Doty learned of another long Blackfoot trek southward.

> About Ten Years ago a party of five chiefs, two of whom are still living, followed the Eastern slope of the Rocky Mountains until

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[3] H. C. Dale (ed.), *The Ashley-Smith Explorations and the Discovery of a Central Route to the Pacific, 1822–1829*, 309.

[4] Colonel Henry Dodge, *Journal of a March of a Detachment of Dragoons under the Command of Col. Dodge, in the Summer of 1835*, 24 Cong., 1 sess., *House Document 181*, 25.

[5] James H. Bradley, The Bradley Manuscript, Book A, p. 184 (in the Montana Historical Society Library, Helena).

[6] Wissler, "Ceremonial Bundles of the Blackfoot Indians," AMNH *Anth. Papers*, Vol. VII, Part 2, 160–61. In 1947 the "Southern Gros Ventre" (Arapaho) pipe was owned by my Piegan interpreter, Reuben Black Boy.

renowned as a great friend of the whites, could not be persuaded 727
to return to the scene of his savage attack on the emigrant train.[12]

Although the Small Robes paid friendly visits to the Flatheads
west of the Rockies, the other Piegan bands and the Blood and 484
Northern Blackfoot tribes knew the overmountain country only 721
through the observations of their war parties. A favorite route
of Blackfoot war expeditions against the Flatheads followed the 487
Dearborn River upstream, went over Cadotte's Pass, and then down the river on the west side of the divide which still bears their name—Big Blackfoot. Farther west, Blackfoot war parties occasionally ambushed the Flatheads as they passed through a narrow defile on their way eastward to hunt buffalo on the plains. This canyon, near present Missoula, the traders named the Hell Gate, because "it was as safe to enter the gates of hell as to go into that pass."[13]

The Marias Pass, which connected the headwaters of the 487
Marias River and those of the Flathead River on the western
side of the continental divide, afforded the most gradual crossing of the Rockies. However, Little Dog told Governor Stevens in 1853 that the Blackfeet had not used this pass for many years and that it had become overgrown with underbrush. Stevens attributed its disuse to "some superstition of the Blackfeet."[14] My older informants gave a more practical reason for its avoidance by their war parties. Marias Pass was long, meandering, and indirect. They preferred the steeper but quicker short cut over Cut Bank Pass at the head of Cut Bank Creek and down Nyack Creek and the middle fork of the Flathead River on the west.

North of the Canadian boundary, Crow's Nest Pass was much used by war parties en route to the camps of the Kutenais, even though game was more scarce along this trail than in the favored passes farther south.

Some Blackfoot Indians journeyed down the Missouri, through 484
the territory of their Assiniboin enemies and beyond Fort Union,

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[12] Bradley, "Manuscript," *MHSC*, Vol. IX, 335–40. 648

[13] Father De Smet knew this gap as "Devil's gate" in 1846 (De Smet, *Life, Letters and Travels*, II, 582).

[14] "Narrative," *PRR*, XII, 106.

484 to visit the "Dirt Lodge People," the Mandan and Hidatsa earth-lodge dwellers at the mouth of Knife River in present North Da-
648 kota. Prince Maximilian noted that two Blackfoot Indians boarded the fur company's steamer *Yellowstone* at the Hidatsa villages in the summer of 1833 to return to their own people. One of them, Left Handed Bear, left behind a Hidatsa wife and small child. The other, Beautiful Hair, was shot and killed by a Cree Indian at Fort Union a few days later.

On August 7, when within two days' journey of the Blackfoot trading post of Fort McKenzie, Maximilian's keelboat party met two Blood Indians, a man and his wife, who were returning from a visit to the Hidatsas and Mandans. The German Prince recalled having seen them in the Hidatsa villages earlier that summer and observed that "the man was well made and both were
177 very neatly dressed."[15] This handsome couple must have been Seen-From-Afar and his wife, whose visit to the Mandans and Hidatsas in the early 1830's is still known to elderly Blood Indians. Seen-From-Afar is credited with having brought back the Mandan pipe and its ritual, a medicine bundle still owned by the Blood tribe. His wife brought back a buffalo headdress of a Mandan or Hidatsa women's society and introduced it into the buffalo-calling ceremony of the Blood Indian women, the Matoki.

484 Nearly two decades later, Seen-From-Afar, then head chief of the Blood tribe, and his wife again visited the Hidatsas at
648 Fort Berthold. They traveled downriver to Fort Union to greet Seen-From-Afar's brother-in-law, Alexander Culbertson, when he arrived on the fur company's steamboat from St. Louis. They reached Fort Union some days before the steamboat was due, and James Kipp, in charge of that post, sent his guests on to Fort Berthold, where they would be safe from hostile Crow Indians encamped near Fort Union. This precaution was well taken, for the courageous chief, who was "splendidly dressed," wearing "a magnificent bonnet of war-eagle feathers falling to his feet," would have made a conspicuous and inviting target for ambitious

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[15] Maximilian, *Travels*, I, 363–64; II, 82–83.

Crow warriors eager to revenge the many depredations of Blood 484
Indians upon their people.[16]

Doubtless a great many visits of adventurous Blackfoot Indians 648
to far-off tribes prior to 1850 have never been recorded. At
the very beginning of the nineteenth century David Thompson 484
learned that there were young men among the Piegans who,
wishing to distinguish themselves, "mix with other tribes and 177
learn their languages, and become acquainted with their countries
and their mode of hunting."[17] This primitive equivalent of
travel abroad must have had educational value not only for the
participants but also for their entire tribes. The few examples of
visits to distant tribes I have cited clearly indicate that Blackfoot
travelers brought back more than knowledge of geography
and of the languages and hunting methods of alien peoples. Some
of them returned with sacred objects and rituals which enriched
the religious life of their own people.

Around their own campfires at night they must have retold for 177
the edification of their stay-at-home friends and relatives many
beautiful legends they had heard from the lips of members of 538
far-off tribes. Probably the common elements in the mythology [171]
of many Plains Indian tribes were the result of the repetition of
tales or episodes learned and retold by such traveling storytellers.
It would have been strange indeed if Blackfoot material culture 177
and crafts were not also enriched by the detailed observations of
keen-eyed and quick-witted Indian travelers who had opportunities
to take mental notes on the daily lives of other tribes.

Nor was the lack of a common spoken language a serious barrier 201
to communication of ideas between distant tribes. Through
the sign language the Algonkian-speaking Blackfoot traveler
could converse with Siouan-speaking Mandans and Hidatsas,
with Salish-speaking Flatheads, or with such distant Algonkian
tribes as the Arapahoes and Cheyennes, whose oral dialects differed
markedly from that of the Blackfeet. The gestures of an

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[16] Henry A. Boller, *Among the Indians: Eight Years in the Far West, 1858–1866,* 302–303.

[17] Thompson, *Narrative,* 366.

12: Lame Bull's Treaty

Of the many Indian tribes who lived on the Great Plains south of the forty-ninth parallel, the last to negotiate a treaty with the United States were those the government referred to as "The Blackfoot Nation," which included the Piegans, Bloods, Northern Blackfeet, and their allies, the Gros Ventres. It was fifty-two years after the Louisiana Purchase before the United States made a formal treaty of peace with these Indian inhabitants of the extreme northwestern portion of that vast region.

Undoubtedly the warlike nature of the Blackfoot tribes was a factor of importance in the postponement of official government relations with them. The first treaties with western tribes generally were made to safeguard the lives and possessions of white settlers or emigrants who passed through tribal hunting grounds. Certainly no white man would have considered settling in or near the country of the warlike Blackfeet so long as there was plenty of fine land available elsewhere. The reputation of the Blackfeet as hostile and bloodthirsty people also discouraged emigrants from following the natural highway of the Missouri River during the growing migration to Oregon in the 1840's. The well-worn Oregon Trail passed far to the south of the Blackfeet, through the hunting grounds of the powerful Western Sioux, Cheyennes, and Arapahoes. As the number of emigrant trains moving over that trail increased during the middle and late forties, the Indian tribes living along the route became increasingly restless. The white transients were killing off the buffalo

648 or frightening them away from their hunting grounds. Fear of Indian attacks upon the emigrants mounted as mid-century approached. Even the establishment of military posts at wide intervals along the route did not relieve this anxiety. The government knew that the Oregon Trail was the thin thread that connected the settled East with the growing settlements of the Far West. That thread could not be broken.

In the fall of 1849, David D. Mitchell, superintendent of Indian Affairs in St. Louis, recommended that the government call a great council with all the Plains tribes living between the Missouri River and Texas to make formal arrangements to indemnify the Indians for their losses and to define intertribal boundaries. He pointed out, "The boundaries dividing the different tribes have never been settled or defined; this is the fruitful source of many of their bloody strifes; and can only be removed by mutual concessions, sanctioned by the Government of the United States."[1]

On May 26, 1851, the Commissioner of Indian Affairs authorized Mitchell to hold a council and to treat with the "Indian tribes of the Prairies." The names and number of tribes to be invited to this council, the choice of the council site, and the details of the proceedings were left to Mitchell's judgment.[2]

Mitchell proceeded to make preparations for a great council to be held at Fort Laramie on the Platte River the following September. He instructed his former colleague in the American Fur Company, Alexander Culbertson, to select delegations from all the Upper Missouri tribes and to conduct them to Fort Laramie. Word reached Culbertson at Fort Union too late to permit him to obtain delegates from the Blackfoot tribes and the Gros Ventres. But he did have time to assemble delegates from the Assiniboins, Hidatsas, Mandans, and Arikaras, who accompanied him to the treaty ground.[3]

So the Blackfeet were not a party to the Treaty of Fort Laramie. Nevertheless, because part of their country was located south and east of the Missouri, their lands within that area were defined in the treaty. A formal description of this portion of the Blackfoot country appears on the sheepskin copy of the Treaty of Fort Laramie, preserved in the National Archives in Washington:

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[1] D. D. Mitchell to Commissioner of Indian Affairs, October 13, 1849, Indian Office Records.

[2] L. Lea to D. D. Mitchell, May 26, 1851, Indian Office Records.

[3] Bradley, "Manuscript," *MHSC*, Vol. III, 266.

> The territory of the Blackfoot Nation. Commencing at the mouth of the Muscle-shell river, thence up the Missouri river to its source,—thence along the main range of the Rocky Mountains, in a Southern direction to the head waters of the northern source of the Yellow Stone river,—thence down the Yellow Stone to the mouth of Twenty five Yard Creek,—thence across to the head waters of the Muscle-shell river,—and thence down the Muscle-shell river to the place of beginning.

The treaty was signed by prominent chiefs of two tribes hostile to the Blackfeet, as well as by two white men who were their old friends. D. D. Mitchell, the senior United States commissioner at the council, had founded Fort McKenzie among the Blackfeet nineteen years before. He had traded with the Blackfeet for seven years. Alexander Culbertson, husband of a Blood woman, had traded with the Blackfeet for seventeen years. Father De Smet, who prepared the official map on which the tribal boundaries agreed upon at the treaty were indicated, was another old friend of the Blackfeet.[4] Thus, even though there were no tribal delegates from any of the Blackfoot tribes at the Fort Laramie council, their interests were protected by intelligent, knowledgable, and sympathetic white men.

Even before the ink was dry on the Fort Laramie treaty, easterners were agitating for a much more rapid means of transportation across the plains and Rockies than that afforded by the lumbering wagon train. Proposals for a railroad to the Far West were debated in Congress. In 1853, Congress appropriated $150,000 for making field explorations and surveys to ascertain the most practicable and economical route for a railroad from the Mississippi River to the Pacific Ocean.

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[4] De Smet, *Life, Letters and Travels*, IV, 1497–98. Father De Smet's original map is in the Map Division, Library of Congress.

One of these explorations, along a route from St. Paul, Minnesota, to Puget Sound, would pass through the Blackfoot country. It was led by Isaac I. Stevens, newly appointed governor of Washington Territory and ex officio superintendent of Indian Affairs. An honor student at West Point, Stevens' military career had been a brilliant one. In 1853, at the age of thirty-five, he was assigned the triple responsibilities of leading a railroad survey, governing a large, newly established territory of the United States, and inaugurating official negotiations with some of the most formidable and warlike Indians on the North American continent.

Governor Stevens had never met the Blackfeet, but he knew that their "warlike and treacherous character was proverbial." Wisely, he secured the appointment of Alexander Culbertson as special agent to introduce him to these Indians. Stevens acknowledged, "I placed the more reliance upon the favorable influence which Mr. Culbertson might exert upon the Indians, as he had married a full-blood Blackfoot woman."[5]

When the Stevens party, exploring overland, reached Fort Union, 715 miles west of St. Paul, on August 1, 1853, they were met by Mr. and Mrs. Culbertson. Then, in traditional Indian fashion, Culbertson sent presents and tobacco to the Blackfoot chiefs with this message from Governor Stevens:

> I desire to meet you on the way and to assure you of the fatherly care and beneficence of the government. I wish to meet the Blackfoot in a general council at Fort Benton. Do not make war upon your neighbors. Remain at peace, and the Great Father will see that you do not lose by it.[6]

History has strange ways of almost repeating itself. Just as the Shoshoni woman, Sacajawea, had been of inestimable service to Lewis and Clark in introducing them to her own people forty-eight years earlier, so did Medicine Snake Woman (Mrs. Culbertson), daughter of a Blood Indian chief, play a major role in establishing friendly relations between this second government exploring party through the northwest and her people, the Blackfeet. Fearful of the expedition's reception by the warlike Blackfeet, Culbertson had planned to leave his wife at Fort Union. But she insisted upon going with him, saying: 648

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[5] Reports of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1854, 195.

[6] Stevens, "Narrative," *PRR*, XII, 85.

> My people are a good people but they are jealous and vindictive. I am afraid that they and the whites will not understand each other; but if I go, I may be able to explain things to them, and soothe them if they should be irritated. I know there is great danger; but, my husband, where you go I will go, and where you die will I die.[7]

While Governor Stevens lectured his men upon the "importance of pursuing a conciliatory course towards the Indians," Mrs. Culbertson "was in constant intercourse with the Indians, and inspired them with perfect confidence." She listened to what the Indians said and reported it through her husband to Governor Stevens. Knowing well her people's love of good stories, she entertained them with accounts of the whites she had seen in far-off St. Louis. "As she described a fat woman she had seen exhibited, and sketched with great humor the ladies of St. Louis, it was pleasant to see the delight which beamed from the swarthy faces around her."[8]

Mrs. Culbertson probably helped to induce the Piegan band chief, Little Dog, reputed to have been her cousin, to accompany John Mix Stanley, the artist of the expedition, to the great camp of Piegans near the Cypress Hills to persuade their chiefs to come to Fort Benton to the council with the Governor. Stanley himself won the admiration of the Blackfeet by taking daguerreotype portraits of them. "They were delighted and astonished 648 822

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[7] Reports of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1854, 196.

[8] *Ibid.*

648 to see their likenesses produced by the direct action of the sun.
822 They worship the sun, and they considered that Mr. Stanley was inspired by their divinity, and he thus became in their eyes a great medicine man."[9]

648 On September 21, Governor Stevens met some thirty chiefs, braves, and warriors from the three Blackfoot tribes in council
[292] in a large room at the trading post of Fort Benton. He observed that these Indians were dressed in their finest clothing "of softly prepared skins of deer, elk or antelope . . . ornamented with beadwork" and that they carried Northwest guns and bows and arrows.

In his opening address to the Indians, the Governor stressed their need to make peace with their enemies, saying:

> Your Great Father has sent me to bear a message to you and all his other Children. It is, that he wishes you to live at peace with each other and the whites. He desires that you should be under his protection, and partake equally with the Crows and Assiniboines of his bounty. Live in peace with all the neighboring Indians, protect all the whites passing through your country, and the Great Father will be your fast friend.[10]

648 Chief Low Horn, answering for the Piegans, spoke of the
721 peaceful intentions of the Blackfoot chiefs. But he explained that the chiefs "could not restrain their young men, but their young men were wild, and ambitious, in their turn to be braves and chiefs. They wanted by some brave act to win the favor of their young women, and bring scalps and horses to show their prowess."[11]

648 Governor Stevens exacted the promise of the Indians at the council to cease making war upon the Flatheads and Nez Percés,

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[9] Stevens, "Narrative," *PRR*, XII, 104–105. Unfortunately, none of these first photographic portraits of Blackfoot Indians have been preserved. One of my elderly Blood informants said he had heard of portraits made at the time of the Lame Bull Treaty which were given to the Indian sitters and were buried with them.

[10] Reports of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1854, 202.

[11] *Ibid.*, 202.

but the chiefs said "they could not speak for those of their tribes 648 who were not present." Before the council broke up, the Governor distributed $600 worth of presents, with which the Indians "were greatly pleased."[12]

The next day Governor Stevens continued his railroad explorations westward. He was greatly pleased with his friendly reception by the warlike Blackfeet, as his diary entry clearly indicates. "As we left the fort . . . we felt that we had made warm and fast friends of all the inhabitants of that region—voyageurs, Indians, and gentlemen of the Fur Company." In his report to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, he wrote of the Blackfeet: "Their present disposition towards the whites is unquestionably friendly. Undoubtedly a party of white men may travel through this country in perfect safety."[13]

Governor Stevens sent Alexander Culbertson to Washington to urge upon the Indian Department the importance of holding a formal treaty council with the Blackfoot tribes. He left his energetic and intelligent assistant, James Doty, with three men, to pass the winter at Fort Benton. They were to make meteorological observations and examinations of the country which would be of value to the railroad survey. Doty also was to collect information about and take a census of the Blackfoot Indians. And he was to "improve every opportunity to impress upon them the benefits of the proposed council and peace with the western Indians."[14]

For nearly a year James Doty remained in the Blackfoot country. 114 His varied research added much to white men's knowledge of these Indians and the country in which they lived. He visited their winter camps on the Marias and Milk rivers, and made the first known physical measurements of these Indians. His sampling 141 of several hundred adult males yielded an average height of about five feet, eleven inches.[15]

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[12] *Ibid.*, 202–203.

[13] Stevens, "Narrative," *PRR*, XII, 117; Reports of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1854, 195.

[14] Hazard Stevens, *The Life of Isaac Ingalls Stevens*, I, 371.

[15] Isaac I. Stevens, "Narrative," *PRR*, XII, 183–87.

114 On the basis of both observation and inquiry, he A compiled an estimate of Blackfoot population. Like the fur traders before him, he first determined the number of lodges, then computed the number of warriors and total population by formula. Doty allowed three warriors and nine persons per lodge. He distinguished between the North Piegans, who spent the summer season in the British possessions and traded with the Hudson's Bay Company on the Saskatchewan at that time of year, and the South Piegans, who summered south of the international border and traded only with the Americans on the Missouri. Doty's estimates were: 161 162

	Lodges	*Souls*	*Warriors*
The Blood Indians	270	2,430	810
The Blackfeet Indians	290	2,600	870
The South Piegan	200	1,800	600
The North Piegan	90	800	270
Totals	850	7,630	2,550[16]

114 In the spring of 1854, Doty explored the Blackfoot country, following the eastern base of the Rockies northward from Sun River past the Teton to the upper tributaries of the Marias, Milk, and Belly rivers. Although he located the Marias Pass and followed it for several miles, he failed to reach the summit of this important crossing of the continental divide.[17] He also collected and preserved 320 varieties of flowers found in and near the Blackfoot country. His collection would have been of great value to botanists had it not become moldy and useless because of failure to carry out his instructions to forward the specimens down the Missouri.

648 Doty's presence among the Blackfeet and his frequent reminders of the proposed peace council may have deterred some of the chiefs from making war on their enemies, but other chiefs and many young warriors said, "This is the last winter we can

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[16] James Doty to Isaac I. Stevens, December 20, 1854, Indian Office Records.

[17] Stevens, "Narrative," *PRR*, XII, 183-87.

A [i.e., James Doty, an official of the Indian Department in 1854--Analyst]

go to war; next summer the white soldiers will stop us; let us 648
steal this winter all the horses we can." Doty learned of more
than five hundred warriors, mostly Piegans, who passed Fort 648
Benton bound for enemy camps. He believed even larger war
parties of Bloods, Northern Blackfeet, and Gros Ventres passed 721
above and below the fort on their way to the Flathead, Shoshoni, and Crow camps that winter.[18]

After the council planned for the summer of 1854 had to be postponed, on account of Governor Stevens' preoccupation with his many other duties west of the Rockies, Blackfoot war parties continued to be very active. Entries in the Fort Benton Journal covering the period from October 4, 1854, to September 27, 1855, listed no fewer than forty-eight outward bound or returning war parties which stopped by that fort. Some comprised as many as thirteen men; others were considerably smaller.[19] There must have been many other war expeditions during that period which did not come near Fort Benton.

While he was en route eastward to the great Blackfoot council in the summer of 1855, Governor Stevens negotiated a treaty with the little Flathead and Pend d'Oreille tribes west of the Rockies. The chiefs assembled at that council complained bitterly of frequent Blackfoot attacks upon their camps during the two winters since Stevens had been among them urging that they make peace with their Blackfoot enemies. Father Hoecken, their priest, also reported that the Blackfeet had "committed more depredations than ever" during the spring of 1855.[20]

When Governor Stevens returned to the Blackfoot country, 648
he knew that his northern route had no chance of being selected
as the most practical and economical one for a Pacific railroad. Secretary of War Jefferson Davis, an ardent southerner and later president of the Confederacy, favored a southern railroad route so strongly that he had ordered the northern survey discontinued and opposed any further appropriations for work upon it. Un-

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[18] James Doty to Isaac I. Stevens, December 28, 1853, Indian Office Records.

[19] McDonnell, "Fort Benton Journal," *MHSC*, Vol. X, 2–48.

[20] De Smet, *Life, Letters and Travels*, IV, 1235.

dismayed, Governor Stevens enthusiastically set about organizing the Blackfoot treaty council, for which he had obtained an appropriation of $10,000.[21]

During his travels westward through the Blackfoot country two years before, Governor Stevens had been impressed with the agricultural and stock-raising potentialities of the Indian lands near the Missouri. He had instructed James Doty to investigate the matter further while Doty remained in the Blackfoot country the following year. Doty's opinion "that a treaty with these Indians, and the establishment of an agency and farm in their country, will do much towards changing them from a warlike and nomadic to a peaceable and agricultural nation" strengthened Stevens' own belief that agriculture offered a rosy future for the nomadic Blackfeet.[22] Nor was his enthusiasm dampened by the contrary advice of Alexander Culbertson, who probably knew these Indians better than any other white man of the period. Culbertson wrote:

> As to Agricultural operations they are not to be thought of as long as Game is abundant. Indians will not work unless their necessities compel them—it is beneath their dignity—and it is evident the day is far off when the Blackfeet will turn the Sword into the Ploughshare and make the wilderness bud and blossom like the Rose.[23]

George Manypenny, commissioner of Indian Affairs, in his detailed instructions to the treaty commissioners issued that spring, did mention the government's plan to "gradually reclaim the Indians from a nomadic life" and to "encourage them to settle in permanent homes and obtain their sustenance by agriculture and other pursuits of civilized life." But he stressed that the major objective of the treaty should be the establishment of permanent peace "with all the most numerous and warlike tribes in that remote region of country."[24]

[21] Hazard Stevens, *Life of I. I. Stevens*, I, 430–31.

[22] Reports of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1854, 207.

[23] Culbertson to Isaac I. Stevens, *ca.* 1853, Indian Office Records.

Governor Stevens, who had made all the field arrangements for the council, was irked that Alfred Cumming, superintendent of Indian Affairs from St. Louis, had been named senior commissioner for the United States at this important meeting. Cumming had had no firsthand experience with the Blackfoot tribes. But he thought he knew Indians. He took a dim view of the Blackfoot future in farming. He looked upon farms among these wild Indians as "opportunities for speculating under the disguise of philanthropy." The two commissioners disagreed repeatedly in drafting the treaty, yet the philosophy of Stevens prevailed.[25]

The commissioners originally planned to hold the council at Fort Benton, but the boats bringing the presents upriver from St. Louis were delayed. Since the presents were to be given to the Indians immediately after the conclusion of the council, they shifted the council site to a location one hundred miles down the Missouri, on its north bank a little below the mouth of the Judith. There, in a grove of large cottonwood trees, the council was formally opened at 1:00 P.M. on October 16. The Indians sat in semicircular rows, with twenty-six principal chiefs in the front row, the lesser chiefs behind them, and the other Indians in the rear. They faced a canvas-covered arbor, under which the commissioners, the seven interpreters, and James Doty, the secretary, took their stations. This scene was simply portrayed in an on-the-spot drawing by Gustavus Sohon, one of the interpreters for the Flathead Indians who were present.

In addition to the representatives of the four tribes of "The Blackfoot Nation," the Indians present included delegations from the Flathead, Pend d'Oreille, and Nez Percé tribes from west of the Rockies, and a single Cree chief, The Broken Arm, who two decades earlier had made the long journey to Washington to visit the Great White Father. He brought tobacco, which was distributed among the principal chiefs as a token of friendship from the Assiniboin and Cree tribes. No Crow Indian dele-

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[24] Manypenny to Alfred Cumming, Isaac I. Stevens, and Joel Palmer, May 3, 1855, Indian Office Records.

[25] Hazard Stevens, *Life of I. I. Stevens*, I, 103.

gates were on hand. But Governor Stevens urged the assembled chiefs to send tobacco to the Crow Indians through their Nez Percé friends at the council.

In their opening speeches both commissioners stressed the theme of peace among all the tribes of the region and between Indians and whites. Governor Stevens branded as a lie the disturbing rumor that had been circulating among the Indians that their lands were to be taken from them and that they would be driven north to the Saskatchewan. He concluded his opening remarks with a simple statement of his plan for the civilization of the Blackfeet:

> We want to establish you in your country on farms. We want you to have cattle and raise crops. We want your children to be taught, and we want you to send word to your Great Father, through us where you want your farms to be, and what schools and mills and shops you want.
>
> This country is your home. It will remain your home. And as I told the Western Indians we hoped through the long winters, bye and bye, the Blackfeet would not be obliged to live on poor Buffalo Meat but would have domestic Cattle for food. We want them to have Cattle.
>
> You know the Buffalo will not continue forever. Get farms and cattle in time.[26]

Unfortunately, there is no record of what the wise old Blackfoot chiefs thought of this talk. Any of them who had ever tasted beef must have considered Stevens a strange man indeed if he preferred it to buffalo meat. His talk of raising crops must have brought to their minds the "Dirt Lodge People," the Mandans and Hidatsas down the Missouri, who owned few horses and lived at the mercy of the nomadic Sioux. It is doubtful that they comprehended at all Stevens' mention of schools, mills, and shops.

Then, article by article, the treaty written by the commissioners was read and explained to the Indians. The first two articles, declaring perpetual peace between the United States and the Indians party to the treaty, as well as intertribal peace among those tribes and with all neighboring tribes, roused no discussion recorded in the official proceedings.

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[26] Albert J. Partoll (ed.), *The Blackfoot Indian Peace Council*, Montana State University, *Sources of Northwest History No. 3*, 6.

The third article declared that all of the country south of a line running from the Hell Gate or Medicine Rock passes in the Rockies eastward to the nearest source of the Musselshell River, recognized and defined as the territory of "The Blackfoot Nation" in the Fort Laramie treaty, "shall be a common hunting-ground, for ninety-nine years, where all the nations, tribes and bands of Indians, parties to this treaty, may enjoy equal and uninterrupted privileges of hunting, fishing and gathering fruit, grazing animals, curing meat and dressing robes." But no tribe would be permitted to establish permanent villages or exercise exclusive rights within ten miles of the northern line of this common hunting ground.

Articles IV and V described the exclusive territory of the Blackfoot Nation: bounded on the south by a line drawn eastward from the Hell Gate or Medicine Rock passes to the nearest source of the Musselshell River, down that river to its mouth, and down the Missouri to the mouth of Milk River; on the east by a line due north from the mouth of Milk River to the forty-ninth parallel (the Canadian border); on the north by this parallel; and on the west by the Rocky Mountains. Tribes from west of the Rockies were prohibited from hunting within this area, but the Assiniboins were given the right to hunt in the easternmost portion of the Blackfoot territory.

These boundaries were drawn on a map which was shown to the chiefs. Alexander, the Pend d'Oreille chief, objected to the provision prohibiting his tribe from hunting on the plains north of the Musselshell River. He asserted his ancestral right to hunt in that region, saying, "A long time ago our people used to hunt about the Three Buttes [Sweetgrass Hills] and the Blackfeet lived far north." Little Dog, the Piegan chief, was inclined to let Alexander have his wish. But the commissioners reminded the western tribes of their small numbers in comparison with those of the Blackfeet (one-fourth the latter's population) and of their right to use the common hunting ground farther south.

Alexander reiterated his desire to hunt on the plains in the territory assigned to the Blackfoot tribes. His fellow chief, Big Canoe, a courageous war leader, even questioned the basic concept of tribal boundaries, saying, "I thought our roads would be all over this country. Now you tell us different. Supposing that we *do* stick together and *do* make a peace . . . Now you tell me not to step over that way. I have a mind to go there."

Then, for the first time, Lame Bull, the venerable head chief of the Piegans, rose to speak for his people. He reminded the reluctant western Indians, professed friends of the whites, that his people did not write this treaty.

> It is not our plan that these things are going on. I understood that what the White Chiefs told us to do, we were to do both sides. It is not we who speak. It is the White Chiefs. Look at those tribes (pointing to the Western Indians), they are the first to speak, making objections this morning. We intend to do whatever the Government tells us; we shall take care to try to do it. We shall consider what the White Chiefs wish us to do, and I think we shall do it. They have done much and intend much more for us. Let us listen. We shall abide by what the White Chiefs say. I hope these Indians will make friends with us and that it may be shown by a friendly exchange of property.

Alexander remained silent, but the commissioners knew his silence did not indicate his acceptance of their definition of tribal hunting grounds. Commissioner Stevens, realizing that the council had reached an impasse, recessed the proceedings, saying,

> We will try this treaty again tomorrow. Think over the matter in your lodges tonight. I will say to the Western Indians that the proposition made to them I believe to be just and good. Let them council together and see tomorrow if it will not suit their hearts.

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When you separate talk in friendship with the Blackfeet and see if your hearts cannot be one.[27]

What magic words were uttered, what arguments were used in lodges of the many chiefs who attended the council that evening, we shall never know. But when the great council was reconvened at noon the next day and the tribal boundaries proposed in the treaty were again explained to the Indians with the aid of a map and a rough sketch of the country drawn on a buffalo skin, no objections were raised.

The commissioners proceeded to read and explain the remaining articles of the treaty. Under the terms of Article VII, the Indians agreed to permit United States citizens to live in and pass unmolested through their territories, and the United States agreed to protect the Indians against depredations and other unlawful acts by white men. Article VIII contained the Indians' consent to the construction of roads of every description, the establishment of telegraph lines and military posts, and the building of houses for agencies, missions, schools, farms, shops, mills, and stations by the United States in their territory. They also agreed that the navigation of all lakes and streams in their country should be "forever free to citizens of the United States."

In return for these concessions the United States agreed to expend $20,000 annually upon useful goods and provisions for the four tribes of "The Blackfoot Nation" for a period of ten years, and to expend an additional sum of $15,000 annually during the same period in establishing and instructing these Indians in agricultural and mechanical pursuits, in educating their children, and "in any other respect promoting their civilization and Christianization." (Articles IX and X.)

Articles XI through XV provided compensation for Indian depredations upon whites or other Indians, either by return of stolen property or withholding of annuities, provided for the exclusion of intoxicating liquor from the Indians' country, and promised that annuities would not be withheld to pay individual

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[27] *Ibid.*, 7-8.

● 648 debts. Finally, Article XVI stated, "This treaty shall be obligatory upon the aforesaid nations and tribes, parties hereto from the date hereof, and upon the United States as soon as the same shall be ratified by the President and Senate."[28]

The great chiefs of the warlike Blackfeet appeared to have been less concerned with the concessions granted the whites under this treaty than with its effect upon their traditional intertribal warfare. During the second and final day of the council only two of them spoke. Lame Bull wanted to know what they should do in case their Assiniboin, Cree, or Crow enemies, not parties to the treaty, should steal their horses. The commissioners advised the Indians to follow the thieves, retake their property if they could, and report the action to their agent.

Seen-From-Afar, the Blood head chief, realistically expressed his doubts of the effectiveness of the treaty as an instrument for assuring intertribal peace:

> I wish to say that as far as we old men are concerned we want peace and to cease going to war; but I am afraid that we cannot stop our young men. The Crows are not here to smoke the pipe with us and I am afraid our young men will not be persuaded that they ought not to war against the Crows. We, however, will try our best to keep our young men at home.

In their concluding remarks to the Indians, both commissioners attempted to answer Seen-From-Afar by re-emphasizing the importance of intertribal peace. Cumming's closing plea was eloquently direct and simple.

> Tell your young men that your Great Father wishes all his children to live in Peace; if you do not live in peace, and continue to go to war, he will be mad with his children. He will be ashamed of his children, and will not send you Blankets and provisions, coffee, and tobacco. Tell your young men to take wives and live

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[28] Kappler, *Indian Affairs, Laws and Treaties*, II, 552–55. Contains the complete text of this treaty. The original treaty and the map used in explaining the tribal boundaries proposed by the commissioners are in the National Archives.

> happily in their own lodges, then the old men will see their sons. 648 •
> Your sons will see their children, and you will all be happy.
> Remember my words.[29]

On this idealistic note the discussions ended. Satisfied that the Indians understood and agreed to the terms of the treaty, the commissioners proceeded to sign it. Then, in turn, the chiefs, headmen, and delegates of all of the tribes present came forward. Secretary Doty wrote the name of each, followed by the widely spaced words, "His Mark," and the Indian placed a neat *X* in the blank area between them.

The gifts which had been purchased for the Indians and freighted up the Missouri were piled high on the council ground, where they served as a constant reminder to the Indian negotiators of the happy prospects ahead. After the last Indian appended his mark to the treaty, these gifts were distributed. They included blankets, cotton prints, sugar, coffee, rice, flour, and tobacco. Many of the Blackfeet had no idea how to use the 177
strange white men's foods. They threw the flour into the air and were amused to see it fall to the ground and cover the grass with its fine powder. They emptied quantities of sugar into a stream and eagerly drank the sweetened water. They cooked huge batches of rice until their kettles overflowed with the odd, sticky foodstuff. They did not care for the taste of the coffee and eventually bartered much of it to the white traders.[30]

Commissioner Cumming started down the Missouri for his 648
headquarters in St. Louis six days after the treaty signing. The next morning Governor Stevens set out in the opposite direction, bound for Fort Benton and the west. Optimistically, he confided to his journal, "We got through the Blackfeet treaty, everything having succeeded to our entire satisfaction, and indeed, beyond our most sanguine expectations."[31]

Neither of the commissioners ever returned to the Blackfoot country. The treaty signed in the field October 17, 1855, was

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[29] Partoll (ed.), *Blackfoot Indian Peace Council*, 10–11.

[30] Bradley, "Manuscript," *MHSC*, Vol. III, 271–74.

[31] Isaac I. Stevens, "Narrative," *PRR*, XII, 222.

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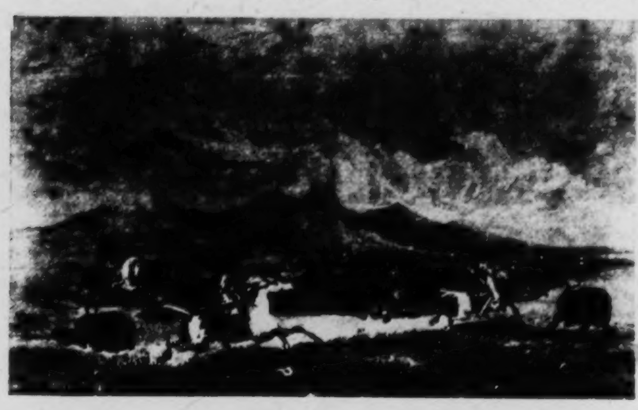
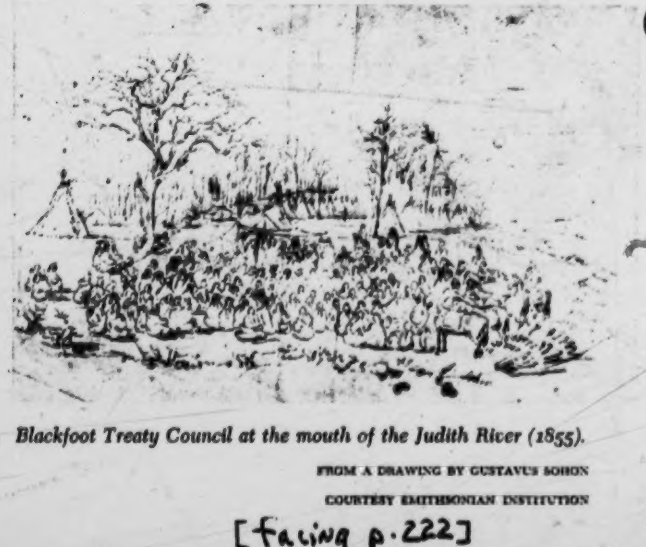


Piegan Indians hunting buffalo near the Sweet Grass Hills.

FROM A PAINTING BY JOHN MIX STANLEY IN 1853

COURTESY THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES

648



Blackfoot Treaty Council at the mouth of the Judith River (1855).

FROM A DRAWING BY GUSTAVUS SOHON

COURTESY SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION

[facing p. 222]

● 648 forwarded to Washington, ratified by the Senate on April 15, 1856, and proclaimed by the president of the United States ten days later. Although known to the white man's official records as the Treaty with The Blackfoot Nation, this first official negotiation with the United States has been remembered among the illiterate Blackfoot Indians as "Lame Bull's Treaty."

622 Lame Bull, also known as Lone Chief, was head chief of the Piegan tribe and first Indian signer of the treaty. He was chief of the Hard Top Knots Band which Stanley estimated at one hundred lodges in 1853.[32] Lame Bull was both a distinguished warrior and a skillful diplomat. He was the leader of the small Piegan trading party encamped near Fort McKenzie which was attacked by a large Assiniboin and Cree war party in the summer of 1833.[33] Twenty-one years later (in March, 1854) he led a large 648 Piegan war party against the Crow Indians.[34] Yet Governor Stevens found him to be sincere in his desire to live at peace with other tribes.

In mid-September, 1856, Rev. Mackey met Lame Bull at the mouth of the Judith River, where the Blackfeet were awaiting the arrival of annuities due them under the terms of the 1855 797 treaty. When the Presbyterian missionary asked this chief if he would permit white men and women to establish a mission among his people, Lame Bull expressed his personal willingness, but wished to consult the other chiefs before making a decision in a matter of such importance. The next day he told Mackey he had brought the matter before all the chiefs in council and that they were agreeable to the proposal. With dignity the philosophical old chief explained,

> We are satisfied that white men are our friends, if they were not they would not go to the trouble of sending us so many valuable presents each year. We desire them to come and teach us about the Great Spirit & tell us plenty of good things. When we catch

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[32] *Pacific Railroad Reports of Explorations and Surveys*, I, 449.
[33] See the description of that battle on pp. 62–63 of this book.
[34] James Doty to Isaac I. Stevens, December 20, 1854, Indian Office Records.

> a wild animal on the prairie & attempt to tame him we sometimes find it very hard. It may take a long time & a great deal of patience. But almost any animal can be tamed by kindness & perseverance. We have been running wild on the prairie and now we want the white sons and daughters of our Great Father to come to our country and tame us. . . . We have a fine country & we are not ashamed to have white men come & see it.[35] 177

The following year Lame Bull's band was hunting buffalo near the Sweetgrass Hills. Amid the dust of the chase Lame Bull's horse was attacked by an enraged buffalo bull. The horse fell. Lame Bull's ribs were crushed and his neck broken. According to one Indian account, Lame Bull was buried on a platform inside his lodge and twenty of his horses were killed for his use in the afterworld. According to another story, the body of this great chief was taken to Fort Benton and buried there by the whites. 622 165 764

My older Piegan informants said that Lame Bull was about sixty years of age when he was killed. Although physically small, this courageous veteran of many intertribal wars and staunch advocate of peace with the whites had great influence among his people. Had he lived, his example and wise counsel might have helped to minimize interracial tensions in the Blackfoot country during the difficult decade that followed.[36] 622 648

Many of the other Piegan band chiefs who placed their marks on the 1855 treaty died equally violent deaths. Big Snake (rattlesnake), chief of the Small Brittle Fat Band, loud-mouthed announcer in the tribal summer encampment and prominent war leader, was killed in a battle with the Cree Indians near the Cypress Hills in 1858. Little Dog, Governor Stevens' favorite, chief of the Black Patched Moccasins Band and successor to Lame Bull as head chief of his tribe, was murdered by his own 165 648

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[35] Klett, *Missionary Endeavors of the Presbyterian Church Among the Blackfeet Indians in the 1850s*, Presbyterian Historical Society, 343–44.

[36] When President Franklin D. Roosevelt was inducted into the Blackfoot tribe during his visit to the Glacier National Park in 1934, he was given the name "Lone Chief," in honor of this great leader, the first signer of the first treaty between "The Blackfoot Nation" and the United States.

165 648 people in 1866. Middle Sitter (also known as Many Horses), chief of the Never Laughs Band and owner of more horses than any other Blackfoot Indian, was killed by the Gros Ventres that same year. Mountain Chief, second in rank among the Piegan chiefs in 1858 and successor to Little Dog as head chief of the tribe, was shot and killed (possibly by mistake) by another Blackfoot Indian in 1872.[37]

At least two of the most prominent Blood chiefs who signed the treaty also met untimely deaths. Seen-From-Afar, their principal chief, brother-in-law of Alexander Culbertson and the wealthiest man in his tribe, died in the smallpox epidemic of 1869. He was chief of the powerful Fish Eaters' Band, and the head chieftaincy of the Blood tribe has descended in his family to the present day. Calf Shirt, chief of the Quarrelers Band, was murdered by whisky traders a few years after the smallpox epidemic.[38]

The Northern Blackfeet were represented at the council by only four band chiefs—Three Bulls, Old Kootenai, Pow-ah-que, and Rabbit Runner. Among the treaty signers there were also eight Gros Ventre chiefs and twenty-seven chiefs of tribes from west of the Rockies, including among them Victor, head chief of the Flatheads, Alexander, the Pend d'Oreille head chief, and the two great Nez Percé chiefs, Looking Glass and Eagle from the Light.[39]

648 This convocation of fifty-nine prominent leaders of eight different tribes at the Blackfoot treaty council in mid-October, 1855, was undoubtedly the most important intertribal gathering ever

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[37] Other Piegan signers of this treaty were Low Horn, Little Gray Head, The Skunk, The Bad Head, Spotted Calf (Kitch-eepone-istah), and four minor leaders.

[38] Other Blood Indian signers were The Father of All Children, Bull's Back Fat, Heavy Shield, Sun Calf (Nahtose-onistah), The Feather, and White Eagle.

[39] Hazard Stevens, *Life of Isaac I. Stevens*, reproduces a number of pencil portraits by Gustavus Sohon of Blackfoot Indian chiefs who signed this treaty. The original drawings have been loaned to the Washington State Historical Society by the descendants of Isaac I. Stevens. Sohon's portraits of Flathead and Pend d'Oreille chiefs who signed this treaty are in the U. S. National Museum. These portraits have been reproduced in Ewers, *Gustavus Sohon's Portraits of Flathead and Pend d'Oreille Indians, 1854*. Smithsonian Institution *Miscellaneous Collections*, CX, No. 7.

held on the northwestern plains. Although the tribes which these
chiefs led had a combined population of only about 12,000, they 648
occupied a vast area in present Montana and the Canadian prov-
inces of Alberta and Saskatchewan which was more than twice 161
the size of New England. Furthermore, a century after that 131
treaty was negotiated in the cottonwood grove near the mouth
of the Judith River, Indian claims resulting from later cessions 648
of land within the boundaries described in that treaty still re-
mained unsettled.

8: Ewers E,G-4,5 (1941-1951) 1971 NF6 Blackfoot NF6

[ca. 1850-1875]

13: Life with Our Father

648 651 AT THE GREAT treaty council in the fall of 1855, Governor Stevens told the Blackfoot tribes, "The Great Father has sent an agent to live at the Forts above who will be your Father. When you have any trouble, go to him as you would go to your Father."[1] His Indian listeners took him at his word. To this day elderly Blackfoot men and women who speak little or no English call their agent *ninnàna,* "Our Father." They refer to his place of business as "Our Father's House."

657 Among the fur traders and other whites the early agents commonly were addressed by the honorary title of "Major." The first Blackfoot agent, Major Edwin A. C. Hatch from Minnesota, was presented to the Indians at the treaty council in mid-October, 1855. Shortly thereafter he established the first agency for his "children" at the fur trading post of Fort Benton.

Major Hatch's two most noteworthy achievements appear to have been the giving of a large ball for the traders at the fort on New Year's Eve, which was so successful that it lasted through the next day and night, and the management of the distribution of the first annuities paid the four tribes under the terms of the treaty eight months later. During most of the intervening period he could not discuss the Indians' troubles with them for the simple reason that he was not in the Blackfoot country. On February 6, 1856, Hatch started downriver to Fort Union to await the arrival of annuities from St. Louis. He did not return

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[1] Partoll (ed.), *Blackfoot Indian Peace Council,* 9.

8: Ewers E,G-4,5 (1941-1951) 1971 NF6 Blackfoot NF6

[ca. 1850-1875]

to Fort Benton until mid-August. In his diary he laconically 651 described the most important action of his administration, the payment of annuities to the Indians at the mouth of the Judith in late September.

> Sept. 22. Beautiful morning.—Recd. the goods and distributed nearly all of them—shall finish in the morning—every thing went off quickly—about 8000 Indians present.
>
> Sept. 23. Fine morning—closed with the Indians—said good bye—and we were off at five minutes of 11 o'clock.[2]

Major Hatch's first and only annual report was written from Fort Union, July 12, 1856. He had been father to the Blackfoot tribes for nine months, but he had not seen his children for five of them. As a result his report contained no recent information on either the condition or disposition of his charges. Nevertheless, 721 it did substantiate the fears of the Blood head chief, Seen-From-Afar, which he had expressed at the treaty council, that he could not prevent his young warriors from going to war against the Crow Indians. Hatch reported that less than ten days after the treaty was signed a war party of Blood Indians departed for the Crow camps. Many others followed. In early February the Blood chiefs told the Major that their young men had supposed the Crows were not included in the peace treaty. Yet Hatch learned that Blood warriors passed through the Gros Ventre and Piegan camps on their way to the enemy, and "when they found the young men of those tribes did not join them, ridiculed them for listening to the advice of the whites." The agent reported that the Blood warriors "stole a few horses, destroyed one lodge of Crows, and killed five Assiniboines." He urged that every individual who had led a war party be arrested 648 and punished by United States troops.[3]

Major Hatch's superior, Colonel Cumming, the superintendent of Indian Affairs in St. Louis, must have regarded this proposal

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[2] E. A. C. Hatch, Diary, June 7–October 15, 1856, typescript copy in Montana State Historical Society Library.

[3] Reports of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1856, 75–76.

648 of a green Indian agent to send troops hundreds of miles into the wilderness to punish a handful of Indian horse raiders as ridiculous. He had much more important worries on his mind. Cumming knew that hostile Sioux parties were roaming the Oregon Trail and that a full-scale Indian war was raging in Washington Territory. In his report to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs on September 25, Cumming expressed gratification that the tribes party to the Blackfoot treaty had been at peace, and he was relieved that these warlike people had refused all participation in the hostilities of the tribes of Oregon and Washington.[4]

657 The following year the Blackfoot tribes gained a new father, Major Alfred J. Vaughan. The fur trader Charles Larpenteur described Vaughan thusly:

> A jovial old fellow, who had a very fine paunch for brandy, and, when he could not get brandy, would take almost anything which would make him drunk. He was one who remained most of his time with his Indians, but what accounts for that is the fact that he had a pretty young squaw for a wife; and as he received many favors from the [American Fur] Company, his reports must have been in their favor.[5]

Larpenteur's characterization should be taken with more than one grain of salt. It was his habit to damn virtually all Indian agents and some very able fur traders as drunkards. As for Vaughan's favoring the fur traders—it simply was not true. On the contrary, in his annual report of 1858 he went so far as to recommend the prohibition of trade in buffalo robes to prevent the ruthless slaughtering of more buffalo than the Indians needed for their subsistence.[6] Had such a prohibition been put into effect, it would have ruined the American Fur Company's business in the entire Upper Missouri region.

Actually, Major Vaughan was an experienced and able agent who conscientiously tried to implement the government's policies

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[4] *Ibid.*, 66.

[5] *Forty Years a Fur Trader*, II, 417–18.

[6] Reports of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1858, 83.

657 241 climate and the shortness of the season" might prove a "drawback to at least partial success in our undertaking."[12]

The 1859 crop was a keen disappointment, damaged by a prolonged drought. But the next year the Major became lyrical over the success of his farming experiment. Wheat "as fine as ever was raised in any State," and "the best Indian corn and vegetables of all kinds and varieties in profusion" proved "the fertility and productiveness of the soil beyond all cavil and doubt forever."[13] To guard against future crop failures because of drought, Vaughan requested $2,500 to enable him to irrigate the farm. He also asked for $10,000 worth of cattle, believing that "the Sun River valley [was] unsurpassed as a grazing country."[14]

It was one thing to demonstrate that farming was possible in the Blackfoot country and quite another to induce the nomadic Indians to take a hand at it. However, Little Dog, the Piegan head chief, appeared interested in Vaughan's experiment. Believing that Little Dog's example would have a powerful influence upon his people, Vaughan decided to open and cultivate a small farm for him a few miles distant from the government one.[15]

• 648 In his enthusiasm for reporting the progress of his children
toward civilization, Major Vaughan claimed that the dread
Blackfeet had "become the most peaceful nation on the Mis-
648 721 souri." This was hardly true. Small parties of Blackfoot warriors
raided as far south as the Sioux, Arapaho, and Cheyenne camps
on the Platte in 1857. The next year a large force of Northern
Blackfeet fought a series of engagements with the Kutenais both
east and west of the Rockies.[16]

648 Nevertheless, Little Dog, who had succeeded Lame Bull as head chief of the Piegans, tried conscientiously to live up to his promise of peace with neighboring tribes made at "Lame Bull's Treaty." In the spring or summer of 1856 he and members of

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[12] Reports of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1858, 78–79.

[13] *Ibid.*, 1860, 83–84.

[14] *Ibid.*, 83.

[15] *Ibid.*, 83.

[16] *Ibid.*, 1858, 95; William T. Hamilton, "A Trading Expedition Among the Indians in 1858," Montana Historical Society *Contributions*, Vol. III, 77–112.

his family paid a friendly visit to the Flatheads beyond the Rockies. As they approached the Flathead camp, they unfurled 648 an American flag to show their peaceful intentions. Two years later he made peace with the River Crows, and that fall two chiefs of the Crow Indians led a group of their people to Little Dog's camp to trade and hunt buffalo with their Piegan friends.[17]

It was much easier for Indian chiefs to negotiate a peace than it was for them to get their ambitious young warriors to keep it. In 1858 a group of "Blackfeet" met the Plains Crees on the North Saskatchewan to arrange a peace. Soon after negotiations were 721 satisfactorily completed and the tribes went their separate ways, some young Cree braves could not resist the temptation to steal Blackfoot horses. The Blackfeet pursued them, killed one Cree, and captured two others. They stripped their captives, tied their 727 hands behind their backs, bored holes in their wrists, and inserted sticks so tightly into the holes that they could not separate their arms. Then they turned the captives loose. Only one of these mutilated men reached his own camp.[18]

In the Indian country where the white population was limited 651 to a few fur traders, the Indian agent, his interpreter, and the government farmers, Vaughan found it very difficult to impress 177 upon his children the power and the character of the white man's civilization. It was not surprising that the Blackfeet regarded themselves as numerous and strong and the whites as few and feeble, or that they said to the Major, "If the whites are so numerous, why is it the same ones come back to this country year after year, with rarely an exception?" To remedy this situation, Vaughan recommended that parties of fifteen or twenty headmen and chiefs be taken on a visit to the East each year for five years, "to impress the Indian with a proper view of the strength and importance of the white man, and create in him a desire to cultivate the pacific arts and sciences."[19] Indian junkets to Wash-

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[17] *Ibid.*, 6–64; De Smet, *Life, Letters and Travels*, IV, 1247.

[18] Henry Youle Hind, *Narrative of the Canadian Red River Exploring Expedition of 1857 and the Assiniboine and Saskatchewan Exploring Expedition of 1858*, II, 126.

[19] Reports of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1858, 119–20.

657 177 ington had been common policy for many years, but never before had Indians from so great a distance made the long trek east to see the Great White Father, nor on so great a scale as Vaughan suggested. This recommendation, like his request for cattle, died in the office of the commissioner of Indian Affairs.

797 Vaughan was pleased when, in 1859, the Jesuits accepted his long-standing invitation to establish a mission among the Blackfeet. That summer Father Hoecken and Brother Magri traveled with the Indians. Then they built three log cabins on the Teton River near present Choteau, where they spent the winter studying the Blackfoot language and catechizing some Indian children from the winter camps near by.[20]

648 The Major was pleased also when the first steamboat ever to reach Fort Benton, in the summer of 1860, carried three hundred uniformed soldiers of the United States. This first large body of soldiers to reach the Blackfoot country merely passed through it. From Fort Benton they proceeded westward over the Rockies, following the newly located Mullen Wagon Road. Nevertheless, Vaughan believed the sight of so many troopers would cause the Indians to "respect and fear the government accordingly."[21]

657 When the Civil War broke out during the next year, Major Vaughan had to be replaced. Vaughan was a Virginian, and there was no place in the government service for a potential southern sympathizer. It was a long time before the Blackfoot Indians received another "father" who was as sincere, able, and experienced as Major Vaughan, who, at the age of sixty, left the Blackfoot country. Eight years later he returned to help the government make treaties with the Blackfeet, Gros Ventres, and Crows.

657 177 Under the "fatherhood" of Major Vaughan (1857–61), the Blackfeet made no great strides toward the civilization which Governor Stevens had so glibly prophesied for them. Vaughan had seen to it that they received the annuities promised them under the terms of the treaty, had shown them that crops could be grown in their country, and had encouraged them to try farm-

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[20] William N. Bischoff, *The Jesuits in Old Oregon*, 86–87.

[21] Reports of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1860, 83.

[ca. 1860-1870]

14: Massacre on the Marias

646 MANY FACTORS contributed to the unrest that prevailed in
the Blackfoot country during the 1860's. Certainly a major un-
derlying cause was the Civil War. Of necessity, the problems
involved in the pacification and civilization of western Indian
tribes were of secondary importance to the complicated prob-
lems of prosecuting and winning a bloody war that divided the
nation. During the war period the most able government admin-
657 istrators were absorbed in the war effort. Although the Black-
foot Indians were not entirely neglected by the Great White
Father, his field representatives among them were weak, inept
men who had little experience in Indian affairs. During a period
of eighteen months they had no agent at all. Of Gad E. Upson,
whom the Blackfeet called "Our Father" for two years after Oc-
tober, 1863, the outspoken old Indian trader William T. Hamilton
scornfully wrote, "He knew as much about an Indian as I did
about the inhabitants of Jupiter."[1]

171 It was another misfortune for the Indians that gold was discovered at Bannack during this period of national crisis and weakness in Indian administration. In the summer of 1862 the call of gold was attracting white men westward, through the Blackfoot country to the newly discovered mining area along the eastern base of the Rockies. Blackfoot chiefs, who only a few years before had doubted the numbers of the whites, began to complain to Agent Henry Reed of so many white men moving

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[1] "The Council at Fort Benton," *Forest and Stream*, Vol. LXVIII, No. 17, 649.

[ca. 1860-1870]

of Montana, Governor Edgerton, fearing war with the Blackfeet was imminent, called upon James Stuart to organize a volunteer force to chastise the Indians. But when it was discovered that the red warriors had withdrawn northward beyond the international boundary, the proposed campaign against the Indians was called off.[7] 727

Governor Edgerton's eagerness to call out the troops—volunteers though they might be—against the Indians was in sharp contrast to the fair and impartial Indian policy he had proclaimed to the first Montana legislature the previous December. "While I shall endeavor to punish with promptness and severity any Indian aggression upon our settlements, I shall at the same time, hold to strict accountability any who trespass upon the rights of the Indian."[8] 648

In the same speech Governor Edgerton had voiced a very popular hope among the white settlers of the new territory, that "the Government will, at an early date, take steps for the extinguishment of Indian title in this territory, in order that our lands may be brought into market."[9]

When Agent Upson returned to the Blackfoot country from the East in the summer of 1865, he was armed with detailed instructions from the Commissioner of Indian Affairs for the negotiation of a treaty with the Blackfoot tribes and the Gros Ventres which would push their southern boundary northward to the Teton River and so open the region south of that line to white settlement. In mid-November he met the principal chiefs of the Piegans and Gros Ventres, some of the Blood chiefs, and a single Northern Blackfoot chief in council. As an inducement to these chiefs to sign the proposed treaty, Upson promised that the government would pay each of them a sum not to exceed $250 annually in money or supplies "so long as they and their respective tribes remain faithful to their treaty obligations." Annuity payments to the value of $50,000 over a period of twenty

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[7] *Ibid.*, 1865, 695; Bradley, "Manuscript," *MHSC*, Vol. VIII, 144–45.

[8] "Governor Edgerton's First Message to the First Legislature," Montana Historical Society *Contributions*, III, 344.

[9] *Ibid.*

648 years were promised the Indians in exchange for their cession of lands south of the Teton.[10]

At the conclusion of the treaty, Little Dog, head chief of the Piegans, was reported to have said, "We are pleased with what we have heard today. . . . The land here belongs to us, we were raised upon it; we are glad to give a portion to the United States; for we get something for it."

The special correspondent for *The Montana Post* who covered the treaty proceedings at Fort Benton hailed the treaty as a great victory for the whites, saying that Upson had made the "concessions on our part as few and light as possible." He exulted in the thought that the treaty "gives over to us all that vast extent of country [embracing between two and three hundred thousand square miles] in which are situated our largest towns—Helena, Virginia City, Bannack etc.—and containing all the rich mines, our best agricultural lands, some of our largest rivers and, in fact, all those portions of our Territory that have proved to be of any worth."[11]

Thomas F. Meagher, acting governor of Montana Territory, who had assisted Major Upson in negotiating the treaty, doubted that the Indians would keep the peace. He well knew that horse stealing was "accounted rather an heroic exploit by the best of
648 these Indians."[12] But the Indians were not content with stealing
721 horses. In less than two months after the treaty council Piegan and Blood war parties killed several miners and traders. When the Commissioner of Indian Affairs in Washington heard of these murders, he refused to recommend ratification of the treaty.[13]

771 During the following winter a reported gold discovery in the Sun River Valley drew more than five hundred prospectors to that region. Some of the die-hards who refused to believe the

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[10] Treaty Between the United States and Blackfoot Nation of Indians, November 16, 1865 (unratified). Manuscript, with signatures, Indian Office Records.

[11] *The Montana Post*, December 9, 1865.

[12] Reports of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1866, 198.

[13] D. N. Cooley, commissioner of Indian affairs, to James Harlan, Secretary of the Interior, April 12, 1866, Indian Office Records.

797 721 feet, in which again the whites have given the first provocation, and our Fathers have been obliged to withdraw for the moment."[16]

627 Meanwhile, Little Dog, the only Blackfoot Indian who had shown any real interest in farming, continued to try to live up to his promise of peace with the whites professed at two treaty councils. In the month of May, not long after he had brought twelve horses stolen from the whites by the Piegans in to Fort Benton and turned them over to Acting Agent Upham, Little Dog and his family left the fort to return to the camp of their people. About three miles from the town he was overtaken by a party of drunken Piegans, who murdered both the old man and his son. Not satisfied with having killed their head chief, the murderers proceeded to mutilate his body with butcher knives. In reporting this incident to Washington, the agent stated his belief that Little Dog and his son were killed "because they were suspected of being too friendly with the whites."[17] So strong was Piegan animosity toward the whites that some of them regarded their peacemaking head chief as a traitor and removed him from his influential position with finality.

648 In spite of their new troubles with the whites, the warlike Blackfeet did not forget their long-standing quarrels with neighboring tribes. Indeed, since the 1855 treaty, the Piegans had added another tribe to their long list of enemies—their long-721 time allies, the Gros Ventres on Milk River. In 1861 a Pend d'Oreille raiding party from west of the Rockies had stolen horses from the Gros Ventres. In an effort to throw their pursuers off the track, they abandoned some of the stolen animals in the vicinity of a Piegan camp on the Marias. When the Gros Ventres found these horses they did not wait for an explanation, but attacked the Piegan camp.[18] The Piegans did not retaliate in force, but were content to raid the Gros Ventre camps in small

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[16] Bischoff, *Jesuits in Old Oregon*, 89-90; De Smet, *Life, Letters and Travels*, III, 858.

[17] Reports of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1866, 203; *The Montana Post*, June 9, 1866.

[18] Bradley, "Manuscript," *MHSC*, Vol. IX, 313-15.

[ca. 1860-1870]

721 was a sporadic, disorganized affair. At no time during the years 1865–70 did the Indians attempt any general operations against [724] the white intruders. It was guerrilla warfare, comprising frequent small-scale attacks by a few warriors over a very wide theater of war. These actions resembled traditional Blackfoot horse-raiding operations rather than their large-scale revenge raids of earlier times.

● 648 Augustus Chapman, Flathead agent who passed through the Blackfoot country en route east in the spring of 1867, termed "Acting Governor Meagher's Indian war in Montana . . . the biggest humbug of the age, got up to advance his political interest, and to enable a lot of bummers who surround and hang on to him to make a big raid on the United States treasury." Chapman observed that hundreds of small parties of whites were traveling between Helena and Fort Benton and did not appear to "apprehend any more danger from hostile Indians than they would in Washington city."[20]

Nevertheless, the white settlers' repeated requests for protection from Indian raids brought a portion of the United States Army to the Blackfoot country as soon as soldiers could be spared for frontier duty after the close of the Civil War. In the fall of 1866 a battalion of the Thirteenth Infantry established Camp Cooke at the mouth of the Judith, near the site of Lame Bull's Treaty of eleven years earlier. The following summer Fort Shaw was built in the Sun River Valley, about twenty miles from the Missouri, and garrisoned with four hundred blue-coated infantrymen.

721 However, the mere garrisoning of soldiers in their country did not halt Blackfoot depredations. In April, 1867, a small war party killed John Bozeman, prominent trail blazer and pioneer settler in the Yellowstone Valley. The Blackfeet murdered several other ranchers in that region during the following winter. The establishment of military posts on their hunting grounds proved one more cause of Blackfoot resentment against the

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[20] Reports of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1867, 259.

8: Ewers E,G-4,5 (1941-1951) 1971 NF6 Blackfoot NF6

[ca. 1860-1870]

whites. Another was the failure of the Indians to receive annuities promised them under the terms of the unratified treaty of 1865. The legal technicality of ratification meant nothing to the Indians. They knew their chiefs had signed a treaty which the commissioners had carefully explained to them would provide the Indians with sizable annuities. They expected to receive them just as they had after Lame Bull's Treaty a decade earlier. When they failed to get their annuities, the Indians concluded that the whites had lied. 721

To remedy this misunderstanding and to clear up the confusion in the minds of both Indians and whites regarding the status of Indian land ceded by the 1865 treaty, William J. Cullen was commissioned to make another treaty with the Blackfoot tribes and the Gros Ventres. At Fort Benton on September 1, 1868, he negotiated a treaty with the Piegan, Blood, and Northern Blackfoot tribes. Although the last-named tribe was again represented by a single chief, Three Bulls, the treaty was signed by Mountain Chief as head chief of the Piegans and by Calf Shirt as Blood head chief, as well as by a considerable number of lesser chiefs of both tribes. The terms of this treaty were largely repetitions of those of the unratified treaty of three years earlier. The most noteworthy omission was the promise of special payments to individual chiefs. The reservation boundaries were the same. And the fate of this treaty was the same—it was never ratified. The Gros Ventres were treated with separately, with the view that they should be separated from their Blackfoot enemies on the eastern portion of the reservation, along with their more recent allies, the River Crow Indians.[21] 648 ●

In 1869 the Indian agency was moved from Fort Benton, where the municipal officials and many of the townspeople were unfriendly toward Indians, to a new location on the Teton River, a few miles north of present Choteau and about seventy-five miles northwest of Fort Benton. There the agent hoped he could 657

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[21] Treaty Between the United States and the Blackfoot Nation, September 1, 1868 (unratified). Manuscript, with signatures, Indian Office Records.

[ca. 1860-1870]

ported that only fifteen of the dead Indians had been fighting men between the ages of twelve and thirty-seven, while ninety were women and fifty were children under twelve years of age. Of the soldiers' losses, there was no question. One man was killed. Another suffered a broken leg when he fell from his horse.[23] 727

When Vincent Colyer, secretary of the Board of Indian Commissioners, made Pease's figures available to the newspapers in a letter calling attention to "the sickening details of Colonel Baker's attack on the village of Piegans," the action was promptly termed a massacre—which it was. *The New York Times* of February 24, 1870, commented editorially, "The question is whether a wholesale slaughter of women and children was needed for the vindication of our arms."

The massacre on the Marias not only roused a storm of protest in the East against the army's ruthless treatment of the Indians, 648 but it had political repercussions on a national scale. A movement to transfer the Indian Bureau to the War Department, which was then before Congress, was nipped in the bud. When the Army Appropriation Bill was discussed in the House of Representatives on March 10, 1870, Congressman John A. Logan from Illinois, who, as a volunteer officer, had risen to the rank of major general during the Civil War, vehemently declared:

> I have always believed the War Department to be the proper place for the Indian Bureau; but I went the other day and heard the history of the Piegan massacre, as reported by an Army officer, and I say now to you Mr. Speaker, and to the country, that it made my blood run cold in my veins. It satisfied me; and I shall therefore move to strike out this section at the proper time and let the Indian Bureau remain where it is.[24]

Not only did the Indian Bureau remain in the Department of the Interior, but the prevailing practice of employing army offi-

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[23] *Ibid.*, 16–17, 73; Lieutenant W. A. Pease to General Sully, February 8, 1870, in Reports of the Board of Indian Commissioners, 1870, 89; Wheeler, "The Piegan War of 1870," *Helena Daily Herald*, January 1, 1880.

[24] *The Congressional Globe*, March 10, 1870, 150.

8: Ewers E,G-4,5 (1941-1951) 1971 NF6 Blackfoot NF6

[ca. 1860-1870]

648 cers as Indian agents was abandoned.

But the white settlers in Montana, who had called repeatedly for military aid to put an end to Blackfoot depredations, vigorously approved the army's action. The generals firmly supported the accomplishments of their officers in the field. Tough-minded Sheridan explained, "If a village is attacked, and women and children killed, the responsibility is not with the soldier, but with the people whose crimes necessitate the attack." His philosophy of warfare differed little from the primitive Blackfoot one—that losses suffered from enemy raiders should be vigorously avenged by attacking any members of the enemy tribe.

727 The massacre on the Marias had an immediate pacifying effect upon the warlike Blackfeet. They were suffering terribly from the smallpox plague and were not in any position to mount a full-scale offensive against the army. Yet when their band chiefs met in council not long after the massacre, a few of them wanted revenge in the traditional blood-for-blood fashion. However, the majority were strongly impressed by this demonstration of the terrific striking power of the United States Army, even in the worst possible weather. They saw that the power of the whites to wipe them out had been demonstrated, and they believed "that to attempt to provoke further war would only result in their total extermination."[35] The advice of the majority prevailed. Less than two months after the massacre, Father Imoda met Mountain Chief and seven other Piegan chiefs in a council on the Belly River north of the international boundary. He informed General Sully that they were unanimous in their desire for a good and lasting peace.[36] Never again did the Blackfoot Indians face the United States Army in battle.

Ten years after the massacre Marshal Wheeler wrote:

> Ever since January 1870, the Blackfeet tribes . . . have been peaceable and quiet, and it has been safe to travel in their country. Very few white men have been murdered by them, and they

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[35] Reports of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1878, 82.

[36] Father John Imoda to General Sully, March 17, 1870, Indian Office Records.

8: Ewers E,G-4,5 (1941-1951) 1971 NF6 Blackfoot NF6

[ca. 1860-1875]

augmented by old muzzle-loading flintlocks and bows and arrows,
the Blackfoot allies forced the Crees and Assiniboins to 411
retreat. The Blackfeet, in hot pursuit, drove the enemy into the 726
river. Their repeating rifles "dropped the Crees like ducks." In
the ensuing slaughter, few of the enemy escaped. Their losses 727
were reckoned (perhaps too generously) at from two hundred
to four hundred. Big Brave, son of the old Piegan chief, Mountain
Chief, claimed to have taken nine scalps in this great victory.
It was the last sizable intertribal battle the Blackfoot tribes ever
fought.[14]

Soon Whoop-Up's competitors were also trading repeating 411
arms to the Blackfeet for ten or more head-and-tail robes each.
The new weapons revolutionized buffalo hunting. This gun that 439
could easily be reloaded on a running horse rendered the bow 411
and arrow obsolete for both hunting and warfare. With these
improved arms the Indians could kill more buffalo and have more 177
robes to trade with the Americans for more whisky and ammunition. 224
It was about as vicious as any circle could be.

Yet the whisky traders' luck was fast running out in the 439
Whoop-Up country. The Hudson's Bay Company, whose trade
suffered from the American competition in their own country, 273
and Rev. John McDougall, a Methodist missionary who was 648
shocked by the drunken orgies he had seen among the traders
at Whoop-Up, notified the Canadian government of the Americans'
invasion of Canada and their debauching of Canadian Indians.
In 1870, Captain W. F. Butler, commissioned to investigate
conditions in the field, recommended the organization of
a well-equipped force of 100 to 150 men to bring law and order
to the region. Two years later Colonel Robertson Ross reported [165]
nearly 100 Indians murdered in drunken brawls, and called for
effective Canadian action to rid their land of the American desperados.[15]

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[14] Dixon, *The Vanishing Race*, 112–15. Includes Frank Mountain Chief's account of his participation in this battle.

[15] William F. Butler, *The Great Lone Land*, 380; John Peter Turner, *The North-West Mounted Police*, I, 81.

648 Corruption of Indians by whisky traders was not the only problem of the West that disturbed Canadian lawmakers. They anticipated white settlement of their prairie provinces, and wanted to avoid the bloody and costly Indian wars that had followed white penetration of Indian hunting grounds in the United States. In an effort to find a solution to both problems, the Canadian Parliament, on May 20, 1873, authorized the establishment of a civil police force in uniform, patterned after the Royal Irish Constabulary, to bring law and order to the West. By the summer of 1874 this North-West Mounted Police force had been selectively recruited and trained and was on the march westward over the plains.

648 439 273 Warned of the approach of the Mounties, the most intelligent American traders either cleaned up their posts or cleared out. When the police reached notorious Fort Whoop-Up in October, not a drop of whisky was found. On Oldman River they established a divisional headquarters, naming it Fort Macleod after their assistant commissioner, James F. Macleod. It was garrisoned with 150 men. Methodically they set about the task of routing out the die-hard whisky traders who persisted in their nefarious business. Several small parties were arrested, their whisky spilled on the ground, their buffalo robes, wagons, and teams confiscated; the traders themselves were fined or imprisoned.[16]

439 Most of the American traders needed no such experience to be convinced that the palmy days of the whisky trade north of the line had ended abruptly. A few of them dropped south of the "medicine line" and became "sneaking drink givers" in Montana. Some of the most able ones attained considerable success in legitimate business and in politics. Alfred Hamilton became manager of his uncle's licensed trading post on the Teton River and later was elected to the Montana legislature. His partner in the Whoop-Up trade, Johnny Healy, became sheriff of Choteau County. D. W. Davis, another of the old Whoop-Up group, became Alberta's first representative in the Canadian Parliament.

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[16] Sir Cecil Denny, *The Law Marches West*, 38-48.

8: Ewers E,G-4,5 (1941-1951) 1971 NF6 Blackfoot NF6

[ca. 1860-1875]

The Mounties were extremely fortunate in their selection of 648
a Blackfoot interpreter. Jerry Potts, mixed-blood son of a Scottish trader and a Piegan woman, was well liked by the Indians. He had played a prominent role in the great Blood and Piegan victory over the Crees and Assiniboins in the fall of 1870. His efforts to explain the policies of the "Red Coats," as the Indians quite naturally referred to the scarlet-clad Mounties, coupled with the effective action of the police in stamping out the whisky trade, did much to convince the Indians that these men were their friends. Assistant Commissioner Macleod, in top-level conferences with the principal chiefs, won their personal friendship and respect.

The police officials wisely realized that the primitive Indians' customs could not be changed overnight to conform to the strange laws of civilized men. They consulted with the chiefs to 692
determine what penalties should be imposed upon Indians who
had committed offenses which among white men would have 681
been punished by imprisonment. Even in cases of murder, they 682
sometimes adopted traditional punishment in preference to the more severe death penalty common among whites. In 1881 a ticklish intertribal situation arose when a Blackfoot Indian killed a Cree. Inspector Denny averted warfare and solved the problem to the satisfaction of both sides by arranging for a Blackfoot payment of horses to the family of the murdered Cree.[17]

On July 8, 1876, scarcely two weeks after Custer's decisive 648
defeat on the Little Big Horn in Montana, Inspector Denny was shown a piece of tobacco which the fighting Sioux had sent to the Northern Blackfoot camp along with an invitation to join them in their war against the Americans. In return for Blackfoot help, the Sioux promised plenty of horses and mules and several white women they had captured. They also offered to come north and aid the Blackfeet in killing off the whites in Canada after they had rid the Sioux country of palefaces.

The Blackfoot messenger to the Sioux carried word of their

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[17] *Ibid.*, 60, 152-55.

● 648 refusal to accept the proffered tobacco. He brought back the Sioux leaders' angry threat to make war on the Blackfeet after they had exterminated the American soldiers and taken their forts. Denny found Crowfoot, head chief of the Northern Blackfeet, very uneasy. He wanted to know if his people could call upon the "Red Coats" if they were attacked by the Sioux. Denny assured the chief that Blackfoot Indians had the same right to protection as any other subjects of "The Great Mother" (Queen Victoria).[18]

Another disturbing influence was the arrival of white settlers in the Blackfoot country north of the line. In 1876 they had established farms and ranches near Fort Macleod and Fort Calgary farther north. To avoid bloody conflicts between Indians and settlers such as had occurred far too frequently in Montana in the sixties, the Canadian government moved quickly to treat with the Indians. In the broad river bottom on the south side of the Bow River, near an old Indian fording place known as Blackfoot Crossing, David Laird, lieutenant governor of the North-West Territories, and Lieutenant Colonel James F. Macleod of the Mounties met the Northern Blackfoot, Blood, North Piegan, Sarsi, and Stony (Assiniboin) tribes in the early fall of 1877. In his speech at the council, Chief Crowfoot paid a glowing tribute to the "Red Coats":

> If the police had not come to this country, where would we be now? Bad men and whiskey were killing us so fast that very few of us would have been left today. The police have protected us as the feathers of the bird protect it from the frosts of winter.[19]

At this council on Bow River on September 22, 1877, the Canadian government negotiated its only treaty with the Blackfoot Indians. Treaty No. 7, as it is known, spelled out its conditions in simple, direct language. The Northern Blackfeet,

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[18] *Ibid.*, 97–100.

[19] Alexander Morris, *The Treaties of Canada with the Indians of Manitoba and the North-West Territories*, 272.

Bloods, and North Piegans agreed to conduct and behave themselves as good and loyal subjects of Her Majesty the Queen. 648 They surrendered to the crown all their lands, comprising some fifty thousand square miles lying west of the Cypress Hills, north of the international boundary, and east of the Rockies. In return, the government agreed to permit the Indians to continue to hunt throughout this vast tract, and assigned reserves to each tribe within the area large enough to allow one square mile for each family of five. The government further agreed to pay $12.00 to each Indian man, woman and child after the treaty signing, as well as an annuity of $5.00; to furnish $2,000 worth of ammunition annually, as well as a stipulated number of cattle, agricultural tools, hand tools, and seeds; and to maintain schools for Indians on each reserve. Each head chief was to receive an annual salary of $25.00 and each minor chief, $15.00. Furthermore, these chiefs were to receive a suit of clothes every three years, a medal and a flag upon signing the treaty, and "next year or as soon as convenient . . . a Winchester rifle."[20]

After the head chiefs—Crowfoot, Old Sun, and Heavy Shield of the Northern Blackfeet; Red Crow and Rainy Chief of the Blood tribe; Sitting-on-an-Eagle-Tail of the North Piegans—as well as the minor chiefs of each tribe, had affixed their marks to the treaty, Commissioner Laird called each of them by name and gave him his uniform, flag, and medal, while the Mounted Police band played "God Save the Queen."

Three days were required to pay the twelve dollars a head promised in the treaty. It was difficult for the Mounties to ascertain the exact number in each family, especially when some Indians argued that they should receive payments for babies which were expected soon. The ubiquitous white traders were on hand 439 to get as much of the Indians' money as they could. These Indians were not used to money, so the sharp traders tried to pass off labels from fruit jars as change. But they soon found that the "Red Coats" were on hand to keep them honest.[21]

[20] *Ibid.* The full text of Treaty No. 7 appears on pages 368–75.
[21] Denny, *The Law Marches West,* 116–19.

657 The Blackfoot, Blood, and Sarsi tribes were assigned a common reserve on the north side of the Bow and South Saskatchewan rivers. But the three tribes did not get on well together. In the next year the Blood Indians were transferred to a new reserve on Belly River. This Blood Reserve remains the largest Indian reservation in the Dominion of Canada. The North Piegans were placed on a smaller reserve near the Porcupine Hills on Oldman River, west of Fort Macleod.

224 So long as there were wandering herds of buffalo to be followed, the boundaries of their reserves meant little to these Indians. The Canadian Blackfoot tribes continued to hunt on their
ceded land and to cross the "medicine line" both to hunt and to
721 trade. Despite the vigilance of the "Red Coats," their wild and ambitious young men continued to capture horses from enemy camps and cleverly to evade the Mounties in bringing them home safely.

648 South of the "medicine line" in Montana Territory, the movement toward law and order proceeded more fitfully. Our government was experimenting with a new Indian policy. President Grant's administration, after the movement to place the Indian Bureau under the army had been defeated in Congress in 1870, decided upon a policy of feeding the warlike tribes of the West
657 instead of fighting them. Under this new "Peace Policy," as it
797 was commonly known, Indian agents were to be appointed upon the recommendation of organized church groups. It was expected that this restriction would insure the appointment of honest, dedicated agents. In the division of tribes among the Christian denominations, the Blackfeet fell to the Methodist Episcopal church, even though there never had been a Methodist missionary among these Indians in the United States.

657 During the early years of this idealistic arrangement the character and ability of Blackfoot agents showed no improvement. Few able, honest men cared to play the role of "father" to a people reputed to be the most bloodthirsty Indians of the northwestern plains for the petty salary of $1,500 a year. But there was no dearth of incompetent applicants for the post. Between

657 and 555 sharp iron blades for the Indian women's use in dressing buffalo hides.[31]

177 Agent May's indignation was aroused by the number of white
657 men who were living with Indian women on the Indian lands.
He proposed that they should marry these women or leave the
582 reservation, saying, "I will not, if left to act upon my own judgment allow so many bastard families to flourish under my eye."

● 648 When, in the year 1871, the United States government discontinued the policy of making treaties with Indian tribes as if they were foreign nations, the status of Blackfoot lands still was confused. The Indians supposed they had relinquished their lands south of the Teton River by the treaties of 1865 and 1868, but those treaties had never been ratified. Legally the Blackfeet had ceded none of their land. Yet there were thousands of white settlers living on ranches and farms, in mining camps, and in several flourishing towns on land formerly occupied by the Blackfoot Indians.

648 To legalize white settlement of this Indian land, President Grant, on July 5, 1873, issued an executive order establishing a
657 large reservation, including all of Montana east of the Rockies and north of the Missouri and Sun rivers, for the Blackfoot tribes, the Gros Ventres, Assiniboins, and River Crow Indians. But the new order was obsolete before it was issued. White ranchers were running thousands of cattle on the Indian lands north of Sun River. Dissatisfied with the new boundary, Montana settlers put pressure upon their territorial delegate in Washington, Martin Maginnis, to get the line moved farther north. On February 7, 1874, a letter from Maginnis read before the Montana legislature told of his progress in getting this boundary redrawn.

> After a hard struggle I succeeded in obtaining from the Indian Department an agreement to change the boundaries of the reservation for the Blackfoot and other Indians. They agree to recede to the line of the Marias, from its mouth to the mountains.[32]

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[31] May to Commissioner of Indian Affairs, May 1, 1874, Indian Office Records.

[32] *Weekly Independent* (Deer Lodge City, Montana Territory), February 14, 1874.

8: Ewers E,G-4,5 (1941-1951) 1971 NF6 Blackfoot NF6

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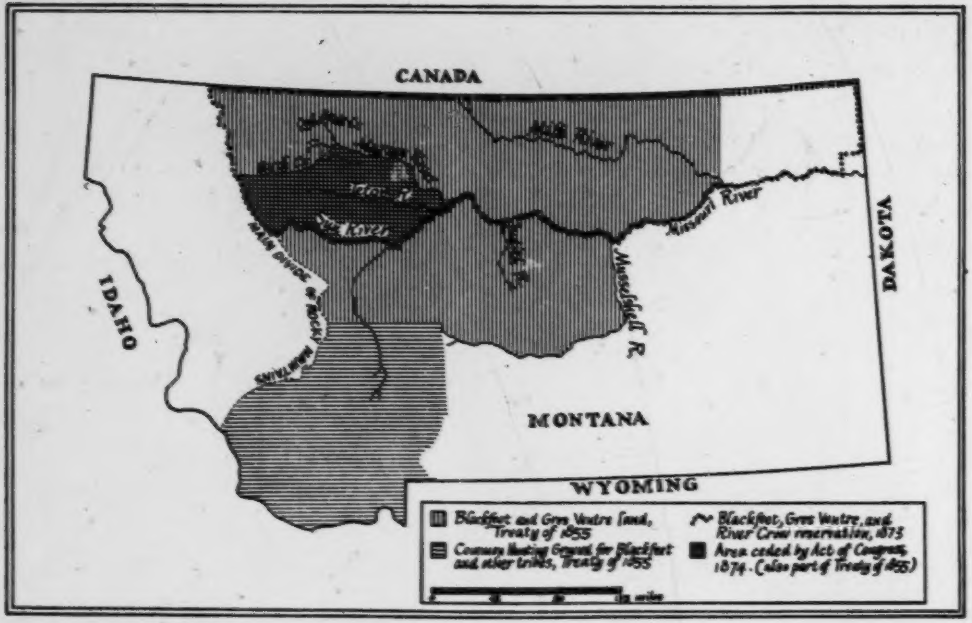
CANADA
DAKOTA
IDAHO
MONTANA
WYOMING
Missouri River
Milk River
Musselshell R.
Sun River
MAIN DIVIDE OF ROCKY MOUNTAINS
▥ Blackfoot and Gros Ventre land, Treaty of 1855
▤ Common Hunting Ground for Blackfoot and other tribes, Treaty of 1855
Blackfoot, Gros Ventre, and River Crow reservation, 1873
■ Area ceded by Act of Congress, 1874. (also part of Treaty of 1855)
miles

Blackfoot Lands in Montana, 1855-74.

[p.271]

648 657 When word of this intended boundary change reached the Indians, a delegation under the Piegan chief, Little Plume, visited their "father" at the agency. Little Plume said that his people never would consent voluntarily to the change in the line. It would confine them to too narrow a strip of territory and deprive them of a large and desirable portion of their hunting ground. Agent May's letter to Washington roused the wrath of Maginnis. In a letter to the *Helena Daily Independent,* on May 8, Maginnis gloatingly wrote:

> The bill which I introduced to move the Blackfoot Reservation back to the line of the Marias and Birch Creek, has become a law. The present Agency will be moved back on the Reservation and the Teton Valley thrown open to settlement. The remonstrances of the present Agent against this bill were received at the Department before its passage, but it was passed and signed notwithstanding, and that too with the approval of the Department.[33]

In reply to the letter published in the newspaper, the spunky agent wrote Maginnis:

> I am sure I do not overstate the case when I say the Indians residing upon this reservation are unanimous in their opposition to the change of line—that is the removal beyond the Teton—South of the Teton they do not care for . . . I could have sent to you for presentation to Congress a "remonstrance" bearing more than two thousand Indian signatures, but I contented myself by sending to the Hon. Commissioner the substance of the words spoken by the Chief Little Plume, and I know now, and knew then that he spoke the sentiments of his Tribe.[34]

Four months later, in his annual report to the commissioner of Indian Affairs, Agent May again showed his indignation at

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[33] May to Commissioner of Indian Affairs, March 24, 1874, Indian Office Records; *Helena Daily Independent,* May 22, 1874.

[34] May to Martin Maginnis, May 25, 1874. Maginnis Papers, Montana Historical Society Library.

the treatment of his "children." "To take from peaceable, friendly 648
Indians a very large portion of their best hunting and pasture 657
land without consultation or remuneration, is a violation of the
wise and Christian policy of the Government."[35]

By an act of Congress of April 15, 1874, the reservation boundary was officially moved northward to the Birch Creek–Marias River line. But Agent May made no effort to remove his agency from the Teton northward to some locality on the reservation. His stubborn championing of the rights of the Indians ended with his removal from office the following January.

May's successor, John Wood, fresh from a period of service 657
as city marshal of Ottumwa, Iowa, brought to his new job an
enthusiasm for law and order that soon was reflected in his
relations with the Blackfeet. Wood found the Indians leaderless
and demoralized. During the preceding year, fifteen to twenty 622
men, including five chiefs, had been killed near the agency as 273
the result of quarrels induced by too liberal use of whisky. The
success of the Mounted Police in Canada had driven the whisky 579
traders southward to Montana, where they operated in apparent [439]
collaboration with the licensed Blackfoot traders. Among the
Indians killed had been the head chief of the Piegans. Agent 622
May had appointed a successor to this chief, but the majority [657]
of the Indians refused to recognize him. They wanted to choose
their own chief.[36]

One of Wood's first acts was to call in the scattered hunting 657
bands. When more than five thousand Indians had gathered
around the agency, he began to urge them to organize, elect head 657
chiefs, and adopt laws for their tribal government. He warned 622
them that unless they changed their habits, they would become
extinct in a few years. After five days of talks with the Indians,
Wood convened a council on April 20, 1875, to elect chiefs and
to make laws. He called upon the Indians to elect a head chief
who did not drink and who would care for and control his

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[35] Reports of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1874, 260.

[36] John Wood to Commissioner of Indian Affairs, February 2 and February 11, 1875, Indian Office Records.

8: Ewers E,G-4,5 (1941-1951) 1971 NF6 Blackfoot NF6

[ca. 1860-1875]

657 first agency to be established within the boundaries of the present Blackfeet Reservation. It is interesting to note that its location was within a few miles of the place where Meriwether Lewis first met the Piegans sixty-nine years before.

●648 So it was in the middle of the decade of the 1870's that law came to the Blackfoot tribes on both sides of the "medicine line." On both sides of the line the same period witnessed the cession of large areas of Blackfoot Indian hunting grounds and the nominal confinement of these people to reservations. The line itself came to have new meaning, for it divided the Blackfoot tribes into two groups—the Northern Blackfeet, Bloods, and Piegans on the north, who had become loyal subjects of "The Great Mother" (Queen Victoria), and the majority of the Piegan bands on the south, who remained "The Great White Father's children."

871 estimable and energetic young ladies, but the school is doing [1875] very little in the education of the Indian children." On ration days as many as two hundred children attended; on other days, no more than fifty. Chief White Calf also complained that this school "amounted to nothing."[17]

648 Following the decision in 1877 of the Northern Blackfeet, Bloods, and North Piegans to swear allegiance to The Great Mother and to receive land in Canada under the terms of Treaty No. 7, only eleven bands among all the Indians known by the general designation of Blackfeet remained as wards of the United States. It was not surprising that Agent Young observed that the Indians on his reservation were "now calling themselves by the general name Piegan" in 1878. They were members of Piegan [162] bands. Yet the official estimate of seventy-five hundred Indians on the Montana reservation at that time was excessively high. It must have included a large number of Canadian Indians who had crossed the "medicine line" to get in on the distribution of annuities from "The Great White Father." For nearly two decades thereafter the problem of determining on which side of the line some of these Indians belonged was a perplexing one for both governments, and especially for their agents in the field. 648 Meanwhile, many clever Indians managed to move back and 657 forth across the line to get in on rations and payments issued by both the United States and Canada. My elderly Piegan informants told me they had no trouble getting a share of the Canadians' bounty prior to the middle eighties. The problem was complicated by the common practice of intermarriage between the several Blackfoot tribes. It was not until the middle nineties that definite reservation assignments were made for some individuals by agreement between their agents in the United States 114 and Canada. In the meantime, the population figures for the Blackfoot tribes in both Canada and the United States were

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[17] *Report of the Subcommittee of the Special Committee of the United States Senate Appointed to Visit the Indian Tribes of Northern Montana*, 48 Cong., 1 sess., *Senate Report No.* 283, 233-34. (Hereafter referred to as *Subcommittee Report*, 48 Cong., 1 sess., *Senate Report* 283.)

657 262 Association offered an open letter to the newspapers pointing out that Ellis's delaying action placed in jeopardy the lives of many of the Montana Indians that he introduced a joint resolution calling for $50,000 to be made immediately available for the support and maintenance of the destitute Indians. Once introduced, the resolution passed both houses within two days.[40]

Actually this emergency did not affect the Piegans alone. It was a regional one. The Gros Ventres and Assiniboins farther east, who shared with the Blackfeet the great reservation covering all of northern Montana Territory east of the Rockies, also shared their suffering when "the tail of the last buffalo disappeared from the prairies." The suffering of the Indians on Milk River was somewhat relieved when their menfolk offered their wives and daughters to soldiers at near-by Fort Assiniboine in return for money with which to buy food from the post trader.[41]

721 261 It was remarkable that, in spite of the fears of Inspector Howard and of many white-skinned Montanans, the destitute Blackfoot Indians, whose ancestors bore such a reputation for "bloodthirstiness," did not in their desperation descend in force upon the great herds of settlers' cattle on the plains south of the reservation and take what food they needed. Perhaps Indian memory of the massacre on the Marias was still too fresh in their minds. The suffering Piegans remained remarkably orderly.

262 648 It was doubly tragic that many of these Indians starved to death almost in the midst of plenty, while no well-fed settlers living on former Blackfoot lands offered any effective aid. The Piegans had been starving for fully a year when, on August 29, 1884, Governor John Schuyler Crosby piously wrote the Secretary of the Interior in Washington: "As Governor of Montana, in the name of her people I protest against keeping the nation's wards within the limits of this Territory in such pitiable, starving condition. Humanity and justice demand their immediate relief."[42]

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[40] Indian Rights Association, *The Action of Congress in Regard to the Piegan Indians of Montana*, 1–20.

[41] *Ibid.*, 4.

[42] *The Congressional Record*, January 6, 1885, 485.

[ca. 1880-1900]

17: Trading Land for a Living

THE EXTERMINATION of the buffalo quickly transformed the 182
strong, mobile, independent Blackfoot Indians into a weak, sedentary, dependent people. They had land—lots of it. Together 181
with the Gros Ventres, Assiniboins, and Sioux, the Piegans in Montana owned a vast tract almost as large as the state of Indiana, extending from the Rockies eastward to present North Dakota. But of what value was it to them? Hunters could not make a living in an almost gameless land.

When Senator Vest and Delegate Maginnis met the South 648
Piegan chiefs in council at the Blackfoot Agency on September 25, 1883, they found these Indian leaders willing to exchange land for other things which would enable them to make a living now that the buffalo were gone. Chief Little Dog spoke:

> I want a reservation with the Birch Creek on the south, as now. We like the land near the mountains. On the east you can draw a line from the western end of the Sweet Grass Hills to the Marias River . . . From that line down to the Bear Paw we have no use for the country. There is no game there. We don't want to go there. We would rather stay here where there are streams and good land, and where our homes lie. The reason I put the line so far east is that I want the people to have a good living; plenty of range for horses and stock. We want the Government to help us.[1]

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[1] *Subcommittee Report*, 48 Cong., 1 sess., *Senate Report* 283, 242–43.

[ca. 1880-1900]

● 648 The other prominent chiefs—White Calf, Three Suns, Little White Cow, and Running Crane—echoed Little Dog's sentiments. 657 Yet nearly three and one-half years passed before a land sale was negotiated and these Indians began to receive the cattle and the equipment they sorely needed to help them make a living on their remaining land.

361 [657] Meanwhile, the two thousand South Piegans who survived the starvation of 1883–84 settled down within a radius of fifteen miles of their agency and lived from week to week upon the rations given them by their agent. The majority of the old hunting bands settled on Badger Creek. The westernmost settlement, farthest upstream, was that of the Black Door Band, under Chief After Buffalo. It was just east of the present crossing of Badger Creek by the road from Browning to Heart Butte. Downstream, near the site of the first agency on Badger Creek, was the Lone Eater's Band, led by Chief Running Crane. On the north side of the stream, opposite present Mad Plume School, lived a mixed group composed of families from several of the old hunting bands, under Big Plume's leadership. Below this group was the large Grease Melters' Band, under the noted Chief Three Suns. And farther downstream was Chief Little Dog's Black-patched Moccasins Band.

Just west of Old Agency, on land now crossed by the highway from Great Falls to Browning lived the Indians' "white brothers-in-law," the white men who had taken Piegan wives. Below them was the agency, and near it stood about one hundred log cabins built to house the old people when Old Agency was erected in 1879. The little remnant of the once large and powerful Small Robes Band, led by Chief Lodge Pole, occupied cabins just east of the agency.

[366] About one mile east of the agency, on a flat south of Badger Creek, was the trader's store. Below it were settled the members of the Buffalo Dung Band. Farther downstream were some of the older people of the Black-patched Moccasins Band, led by Shaggy Bear Chief. 796 237 It was on the flat south of this band that the Piegans held their first sun dance after the buffalo were gone --the first in which cattle tongues were the sacred food.

8: Ewers E,G-4,5 (1941-1951) 1971 NF6 Blackfoot NF6

[ca. 1880-1900]

Like many another war veteran, White Quiver had difficulty 729
adjusting to the monotony of peacetime living. Police records
show that he was repeatedly arrested and jailed for drunkenness [689]
until, in 1897, this very able man was given a sergeant's [625]
uniform and enrolled in the Indian Police.[7]

For four long years the hapless Piegans remained huddled together in their little band camps on Badger and Birch creeks 433 on the far southern portion of their huge reservation. Their economic progress was painfully slow, slower in fact than that of any other tribes in Montana. Drought, strong winds, and late 241 spring and early fall frosts discouraged their meager efforts at tilling the soil. In 1886 their agent reported "quite a number of potato patches" cultivated by the Indians. But the total farming effort of more than two thousand Indians amounted to but twelve acres.[8] Obviously, these former big game hunters derived little satisfaction from grubbing in the dirt.

While the individual Indians owned no cattle, the agency 224 herd of about five hundred head proved a tempting target for adventurous meat-loving Indians, who found they could kill a [231] cow or steer and get away with both meat and hide before the herder discovered them. Agent Allen reported that "many cattle have been lost in that way."[9] Occasionally, young Indians killed a steer belonging to a white rancher south of the reservation. They justified their action by saying that the whites had killed a great many of their buffalo. Why shouldn't they kill a few of the white men's cattle?

Meanwhile, white cattlemen cast envious eyes on the great 648 ● expanse of reservation grassland unused by the Indians. On February 25, 1884, Delegate Maginnis introduced into the House of Representatives a bill which was intended to reduce the area of the reservation and throw the ceded portion open to settlement. But the Commissioner of Indian Affairs objected to the

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[7] Journal of Indian Police, 1890–1895, the Blackfeet Archives.

[8] Reports of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1885, 118.

[9] *Ibid.*

640 bill on the ground that a land cession should be negotiated with
10 the Indians in the field.[10]

On May 15, 1886, Congress authorized the appointment of the Northwest Commission to negotiate with the Sioux, Assiniboin, Gros Ventre, and Blackfoot Indians of Montana for the cession of "so much of their land as they do not require, in order to obtain the means to enable them to become self-supporting, as a pastoral and agricultural people, and to educate their children in the paths of civilization."[11]

After completing negotiations with the tribes farther east, the commissioners proceeded, under abominable weather conditions, toward the Blackfoot Agency. Traveling through snow as much as two feet deep, in temperatures as low as fifty degrees below zero, it took them sixteen days to make the last one hundred miles from Sun River northward to the agency. They arrived at the agency on February 8, 1887, to find that "the Indians had been tampered with by designing white men whom we found at the Agency–men who hoped to gain some advantage to themselves, in one way or another." Prompted by these men, the chiefs demanded $3,000,000 for their surplus lands. This was much more than the commissioners believed they were authorized to offer. Finally, "after long and patient reasoning with them," the Indians agreed to accept $150,000 per year for ten years.[12]

On February 11, an agreement was signed by the commissioners, by chiefs White Calf and Three Suns (Big Nose), and by
823 220 other adult males of the Piegan tribe. Elderly Indians who, as young men, affixed their marks to this paper, referred to it in their conversations with me as "when we sold the Sweet Grass Hills." Although the eastern boundary between the Piegans and their Gros Ventre neighbors had been indefinite, the Piegans considered the Sweet Grass Hills the most prominent landmark in

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[10] Commissioner of Indian Affairs to Secretary of Interior, April 3, 1884, Indian Office Records.

[11] Kappler, *Indian Affairs, Laws and Treaties*, I, 261–62.

[12] Report of Negotiations of the Commissioners, February 11, 1887. Special Case No. 144, Indian Office Records.

[TEXT CONTINUED ON PAGE 306]

[ca. 1880-1900]

823 that portion of the ceded area over which their buffalo hunting parties used to roam. The Blackfeet Reservation established 657 under the terms of this agreement,^A comprised the westernmost 131 portion of their former reservation. Its eastern boundary followed the main channel of Cut Bank Creek, from its mouth upstream for a distance of twenty miles, thence in a line due northward to the Canadian boundary. The new reservation was bounded on the north by the international line, on the west by the summit of the Rockies, and on the south by Birch Creek. 657 [161] It was still a large area in proportion to the number of Indians residing upon it. Its 1,760,000 acres provided an equivalent of 775 acres for each man, woman, and child among the Piegans of Montana. When their agent stated that "this reservation gives them sufficient land for all their wants," his conclusion must have sounded reasonable to both whites and Indians.[13]

648 657 In return for the land relinquished by the Indians, the government agreed to spent $150,000 annually for a period of ten years to purchase livestock, agricultural and mechanical implements, goods, clothing, and subsistence, to provide for the education of the Indian children, to furnish medical care, to build a new agency, schools, and shops, to assist the Indians in building homes and enclosing their farms, and "to promote their civilization, comfort and improvement."

As an incentive to Indian industry, the agreement further provided that in the distribution of livestock, goods, clothing, agricultural implements, and the like, "preference shall be given to Indians who endeavor by honest labor to support themselves, and especially to those who in good faith undertake the cultivation of the soil or engage in pastoral pursuits as a means of obtaining a livelihood."[14]

241 Congress approved the agreement on May 1, 1888. That very spring some of the Piegan bands, encouraged by the government's promise to reward industry, moved northward from Badger Creek. They broke 150 acres of land on Two Medicine River

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[13] Reports of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1888, 150.

[14] *Ibid.*, 1888, 302–19. Contains full text of this agreement.

A [i.e., the agreement with the U.S government of 1887—Analyst]

[ca. 1880-1900]

buildings were erected, among them a hospital and a modern slaughterhouse. The new agency was occupied in the spring of 1895. 657

In the early nineties the Blackfoot agent was constantly bothered by white prospectors who were invading the westernmost 648 ● portion of the reservation in search of precious minerals, and by Indians who complained that these whites were stealing their gold. This mountainous area was of little value to the Indians for grazing or farming. Agent George Steel, in 1893, recommended that the mountainous strip be sold and the proceeds placed to the credit of the Indians as an additional fund for their support and maintenance.[25]

During the month of September, 1895, three commissioners met with the Indians on the Blackfeet Reservation to negotiate an agreement for the sale of this western strip. They found the Indian leaders again asked $3,000,000 for the strip of land the whites wanted. They offered $1,250,000. A compromise was finally reached in which the Indians were allowed $1,500,000 in addition to the right to hunt, fish, and cut timber in the mountainous area as long as it remained public lands of the United States. The provisions of this agreement were very similar to those of the treaty negotiated in 1887. In effect, they provided a continuation of government expenditures at the rate of $150,000 per year for another decade after the expiration of the payments under the terms of the previous agreement.

The agreement acknowledged that the Blackfeet Reservation was "wholly unfit for agriculture," but since the Indians demonstrated their ability to raise cattle, "and there is every probability that they will become self-supporting by attention to this industry," the whole reservation was to be held by these Indians as a communal grazing tract during the period of the agreement.[26]

When the ceded strip was opened to prospectors under the

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[25] Reports of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1893, 173.

[26] Kappler, *Indian Affairs, Laws and Treaties*, I, 604–609. Contains full text of this agreement.

[ca. 1880-1900]

648 mineral-land laws in mid-April, 1898, more than five hundred whites searched the valleys on the eastern slope of the Rockies, hoping to strike it rich. But they found no gold and very little other precious mineral. The gold rush to these former Blackfoot lands proved a dismal disappointment.[37] Today much of this land is included in Glacier National Park.

177 Between the years 1887 and 1900, the Blackfoot Indians in Montana made greater progress toward civilization than in any other period of equal duration in their history. A few comparisons of figures from the annual reports of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs for 1886 and 1900 clearly portray the extent of this progress:

	1886	*1900*
Number of Indians who can read	18	900
Number who wear citizens dress	40	2,085*
Horses and mules owned by Indians	1,205	22,004
Cattle owned by Indians	0	12,000
Acres cultivated by Indians	12	500
Bushels oats, barley, rye harvested	30	700
Bushels vegetables harvested	100	3,700
Tons of hay cut	170	6,000

* All.

In 1886 the primitive Blackfeet had not recovered from the double shock of the disappearance of their staff of life, the buffalo, and the prolonged period of starvation following the extermination of that animal. They had neither the knowledge nor the resources to make a living in the white man's world.

131 Even though their reservation area was twice reduced during this period, these Indians still owned a large area in proportion to their numbers. The 2,085 Indians on the Blackfeet Reservation
311 still owned in common nearly 1,500,000 acres. Furthermore, this was good land—some of the finest grazing land in the United
233 States. The Indians were demonstrating their willingness to work at a task which they enjoyed, the raising of cattle and horses.

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[37] Reports of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1898, 182.

8: Ewers E,G-4,5 (1941-1951) 1971 NF6 Blackfoot NF6

[1900-1950]

18: Learning to Walk Alone

● 648 GEORGE BIRD GRINNELL, one of the Blackfoot Indians' staunchest friends, told them in council in the year 1895, "If you are helped for ten years . . . you will not then want any more help. You will learn to walk alone like the white man; the only difference will be the color of the skin."[1]

This philosophy dominated the thinking of white men who planned and administered government policies for the Blackfeet Reservation in the early years of the present century. Knowing that the Blackfeet had made remarkable economic progress since the late eighties, they assumed this progress would continue at an accelerated pace in the years ahead. The Indian population of the reservation appeared to be relatively static. [162] In fact, the Bureau of the Census, in reporting its findings in 1910, took pains to point out that the 2,268 Indians then living on the Blackfeet Reservation in Montana little exceeded the number residing there a quarter of a century earlier.[2] The planners assumed that when the tribal lands were divided equally among these Indians, each would receive enough land to provide him a good living as a farmer or stockman. Then surely the Indian would "learn to walk alone like the white man."

In that paternalistic system of Indian administration, it was always assumed that the Great White Father knew what was best for his children. The Indian agent, not the chiefs, would 648 ● be the Moses who would lead his children out of the bondage of ignorance and poverty into the promised land of knowledge and prosperity. There was no place in that system for the traditional pattern of Indian leadership. Consequently, the position [622] of head chief was abandoned after the death of White Calf in 1903. Indian achievement of a way of life like that of rural whites was the goal toward which the planners were striving. That many of the Indians, especially the fullbloods, cherished [177] attitudes, beliefs, and customs which were quite unlike those of whites did not seem important to the policy makers of the time.

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[1] Proceedings of the Commissioners, Blackfeet Land Agreement, Doc. No. 51 (1895), 494, Indian Office Records.

[2] *Indian Population in the United States and Alaska, 1910*, U. S. Bureau of Census, 75.

Many factors conspired to impede the Indians' progress toward 657 the goal set for them. Elaborate and costly programs devised by whites failed to rouse the interest and co-operation of Indians who were supposed to benefit from them. Frequent changes in agents provided fitful and sometimes very weak local leadership, while white men covetous of the Indians' land exploited this weakness to gain possession of some of the best land on the reservation. Finally, the vagaries of the weather—prolonged summer droughts and harsh winter storms—nullified the best laid plans of men.

During the first decade of this century irrigation came to be 657 regarded as the magic formula for the agricultural development 241 of the low rainfall areas of the west. Oblivious to the fact that the Blackfoot Indians had shown little desire to make their living 312 by growing crops, the planners embarked upon the construction of extensive irrigation projects on their Montana reservation in 1908. For several years hundreds of Indian men found employment [464] on these construction projects. Even though much of the equipment was strange to them, they learned to use it and did well in their work. They enjoyed working for regular daily wages. But when the projects were completed, very few Indians 657 could be induced to farm the irrigated lands. When Frank Knox, 241 a member of the Board of Indian Commissioners, visited the Blackfeet Reservation in 1926, he found that Indians were farming only 306 acres, or a little over 1 per cent of the 21,341 acres

snows and blinding blizzards occur. Temperatures of 20 to 40 degrees 132
below zero are not uncommon in severe winters.

The known movement of the Blackfoot in early historic times was 174
southwestward from the vicinity of the Eagle Hills in present Saskatchewan toward the Rockies and the valley of the Missouri. Pressure 167
from Cree and Assiniboin moving westward in their rear and the attraction of fine buffalo hunting grounds to the southwest probably were important factors influencing this late 18th and early 19th century movement. However, it should be noted that the Blackfoot also moved in the direction of their best sources of horses and *away* from the white men's trading posts on the Saskatchewan. It is probable that establishment of American trading posts on the Missouri near the mouth of the Marias in 1831 and subsequent years tended to encourage most of the Piegan and many Blood Indian bands to range south of the international line. Prior to 1831, Blackfoot war parties traveled far south of the Missouri, but it is doubtful whether their hunting camps often crossed that river before then.

In the mid-19th century and earlier the friendly Sarsi and Gros 175
Ventres occupied part of the country claimed by the Blackfoot in the far north and east, while hostile tribes disputed their right to hunt in 648
portions of their claim. The Cree and Assiniboin impinged on Black- 181
foot territory in the northeast, the Crow in the southeast. Several trans-Rockies tribes pressed their right to hunt buffalo on lands claimed by the Blackfoot east of the mountains, and especially south of the Missouri. The rights of these western Indians were recognized by the Government in the Blackfoot Treaty of 1855, which set aside the southern portion of the Blackfoot claim, south of the Musselshell River, as a common hunting ground for the western tribes and the Blackfoot, in which none of the tribes might establish permanent villages. That treaty also recognized the right of the Assiniboin to hunt in the easternmost portion of the Blackfoot claim west of the mouth of Milk River. Thus the movements of Blackfoot hunting bands were much more restricted than the boundaries of their claim. It was rare for any Piegan, Blood, or North Blackfoot band to hunt east of the Bearpaw Mountains, south of the Musselshell River, or north of the Red Deer River. I have indicated the common hunting territory of the Blackfoot tribes on the map (fig. 24). This was the region within which the three Blackfoot tribes actually made their living in the mid-19th century.

THE BLACKFOOT YEARLY ROUND

The annual movements of the Blackfoot tribes may be considered in 221
terms of four seasons of unequal length: (1) the season of the winter camp, (2) the spring hunting and root-gathering season, (3) the sum-

THE HORSE IN WAR

BRIEF HISTORY OF BLACKFOOT INTERTRIBAL WARFARE

American fur traders recognized the Blackfoot as the most potent 648
and aggressive military power in the northwestern Plains in the 19th
century. Collectively the three Blackfoot tribes comprised one of the 721
three strongest military powers of the Great Plains. The other two
great powers of the Plains were the Teton Dakota (allied with the
Northern Arapaho and Northern Cheyenne), and the Comanche
(allied with the Kiowa and Kiowa-Apache). Allies of the Blackfoot
were the Sarsi and (until 1861) the Gros Ventres.

Blackfoot war parties operated in a vast theater of warfare extend-
ing far beyond the limits of the area over which they hunted (fig. 24). 175
In 1787, David Thompson reported a Piegan raid from the vicinity 721
of present Edmonton, Alberta, southward as far as "about 32 degrees
north latitude." Members of that party returned with spoils in horses
and riding gear captured directly from the Spanish (Thompson, 1916,
pp. 370–371). That was by all odds the most distant Blackfoot raid
that has been reported. Against the Assiniboin and Cree the Black-
foot raided eastward beyond the South Saskatchewan and beyond Fort
Union at the mouth of the Yellowstone. They raided westward as far
as Sand Point, in present Idaho, against the Salishan tribes (Teit,
1930, p. 364). They repeatedly attacked the Flathead in their Bitter-
root Valley homeland west of the Rockies, and frequently warred upon
the Kutenai of Tobacco Plains (Hamilton, 1900, p. 103). Their raids
against Shoshonean enemies carried them westward to Fort Hall and
the Boise Valley on Snake River and as far southwestward as Utah
Lake, in present Utah (Stuart, 1896, p. 119; Steward, 1938, p. 208).
Gregg (1905, vol. 19, pp. 221–239) reported "Blackfeet" parties raid-
ing along the Santa Fe Trail in the southern Plains in 1829–31.
These were members of a group of "Blackfeet" and Gros Ventres who 175
joined the Cheyenne and Arapaho near the Black Hills some time
prior to 1826, and moved south of the Platte River with them (Grin- 648
nel, 1923, vol. 1, pp. 39–40). Colonel Dodge found "a small band of
Blackfeet proper, consisting of about fifty" living with the Cheyenne
in the fall of 1835 (Dodge, 1836, p. 25). Some of these Blackfoot may
not have returned to their own people, for Major Culbertson met 10
lodges of Blood Indians living with the Arapaho at the Laramie
Treaty Council 16 years later (Bradley MS., bk. A, p. 184).

175 648 721 Blackfoot traditions claim that the Shoshoni were their only enemies in pre-horse times. According to Saukamappee's account some Cree and Assiniboin warriors aided the Piegan in fighting the Shoshoni in the period preceding Blackfoot acquisition of horses (Thompson, 1916, pp. 328–338). This indicates that those eastern neighbors of the Blackfoot were friendly at that time. Yet James Isham, in 1743, reported that "the Sinne-poets and other Indians" were going to war against the "Earchethinues" (perhaps both Gros Ventres and Blackfoot), while Graham recorded Assiniboin raiding of "Archithenue" horses in 1775 (Isham, 1949, pp. 113, 311). Probably Blackfoot-Cree warfare also was initiated soon after the Blackfoot acquired horses. Assiniboin and Cree, well armed by white traders and covetous of Blackfoot horses and hunting grounds, continued to exert pressure on the Blackfoot from the northeast. Those tribes continued at war with the Blackfoot until the middle 1880's, although occasional short-lived periods of peace interrupted the prolonged hostility.

After the Blackfoot tribes acquired both horses and firearms they pushed the Shoshoni southward and westward and forced the Flathead and Kutenai from their hunting grounds on the Plains immediately east of the Rockies to sanctuary in the wooded valleys west of the mountains (Ferris, 1940, pp. 90–92; Thompson, 1916, pp. 304, 327–44, 463; Teit, 1930, pp. 316–321). Lacking firearms the Shoshoni and Salishan tribes were inadequately equipped to oppose the aggressive and numerous Blackfoot. By the end of the first decade of the 19th century the Salishan tribes and the Nez Percé began to acquire firearms. They united in buffalo-hunting expeditions onto the Plains which were strongly opposed by the Blackfoot (Ewers, 1948, pp. 14–17). The Salishan tribes and the Shoshoni remained enemies of the Blackfoot until the end of buffalo days. Blackfoot-Nez Percé conflicts were rare after about 1855.

Contemporary white observers of the Blackfoot did not mention any conflicts with the Crow Indians prior to 1800. It is probable these tribes seldom met prior to that date. Yet, in 1811 Henry (Henry and Thompson, 1897, vol. 2, p. 726) found that the Crow were the only tribe to venture northward against the Blackfoot. Blackfoot-Crow hostility continued, with few brief peaceful intervals, until 1885.

In the middle of the 19th century the Blackfoot were at the height of their power. Their frequent raids over the Rockies endangered the Catholic Mission to the Flathead and were an important cause of its abandonment in 1850. Three years later they forced the temporary abandonment of John Owen's trading post among the Flathead. On the south, Blackfoot raids forced the American Fur Co. to abandon its post among the Crow in 1855. Midcentury also witnessed the re-

treat of the Cree from their eastern borders. In 1845, De Smet re- 175
ported that the Cree were continually encroaching on Blackfoot
territory (De Smet, 1905, vol. 2, p. 519). But before 1865 the region 721
around Fort Edmonton, once the scene of many battles, became peace- 648
ful, due to Cree withdrawal eastward (Mandelbaum, 1940, p. 185).
So successful were the Blackfoot in their wars on all fronts that in
1861 the Piegan did not hesitate to accept the challenge of their old
friends the Gros Ventres, and added them to their list of enemies.

A number of the more distant tribes which came in less frequent contact with the Blackfoot than those mentioned above, considered the Blackfoot enemies. Maximilian found the Hidatsa, Mandan, and Arikara referred to the Blackfoot as enemies in 1833 (Maximilian, 1906, vol. 23, pp. 383, 553; vol. 24, p. 15). Teton Dakota hostility toward the Blackfoot increased as the extermination of buffalo east of the Missouri forced them to move westward in the middle of the century. When Sitting Bull and his followers fled to Canada in the spring of 1877, their nearness to the Blackfoot increased the incidence of small-scale conflicts between Teton and Blackfoot until those Sioux returned to the United States in 1881. Blackfoot relations with the Cheyenne and Arapaho were generally friendly during the first half of the 19th century. However, Blackfoot raids on Cheyenne and Arapaho horse herds were reported in 1858 (U. S. Comm. Ind. Affairs, 1858, p. 447).

In the youth and young manhood of my informants (ca. 1865-85) the Blackfoot tribes raided the Flathead, Pend d'Oreille, and Kutenai west of the Rockies, the Cree, Assiniboin, Gros Ventres, and Teton Dakota on the east, and the Crow on the south. Raids against the Shoshoni and other more distant tribes were infrequent. The Piegan, Mountain Chief (born ca. 1846), claimed to have counted coup on members of seven or eight different tribes: Cree, Sioux (perhaps including both Assiniboin and Teton), Plains Ojibwa, Gros Ventres, Flathead, Nez Percé, and Crow. The last great battle, involving large forces on both sides, was fought with the Cree near present Lethbridge, Alberta, in 1870. However, raiding for horses continued until 1885-86.

THE HORSE AS A CAUSE OF INTERTRIBAL CONFLICTS

The Blackfoot and neighboring tribes regarded the horse raid 721
as an overt warlike act and a proper and important part of their
war complex. It is true the ideal horse raid was aimed at the
capture of enemy horses by stealth, without the knowledge of their
owners and without bloodshed. It was not directed toward the con-
quest of enemy territory nor toward the extermination of the fighting
force of an enemy tribe. Nevertheless, a horse raid constituted an

721 intertribal incident recognized by the Indians as an act of aggression. Warriors were expected to respect the property rights in horses of individuals of other tribes with whom their own tribe was at peace. A horse raid directed against a tribe previously at peace with that of the raiders was recognized as a legitimate cause for retaliation in kind or in force against the aggressors' tribe. If the raid was carried out against a tribe previously hostile, the raid tended to prolong war between the tribes involved and to nullify any peace negotiations that might be planned or in progress between chiefs of those tribes. Indians who lost horses through capture by a small party of raiders invariably blamed not only the members of that party but their entire tribe.

175 The causes of intertribal wars in which the Blackfoot engaged, and
which were initiated prior to 1810, cannot be specifically documented
721 from historical records. Nevertheless, the prominent part played by
horse raiding in the intertribal warfare of the late 18th and early 19th century as emphasized in fur traders' accounts suggests that the Indians' need for horses to use in hunting buffalo and transporting food and domestic articles furnished a major motive for that early warfare. Our knowledge of the direction of flow in the distribution of horses among the tribes of this region in the 18th century and of the relative wealth in horses of these tribes at a somewhat later date would suggest that the Blackfoot were the aggressors in their early wars with the tribes to the south and west, while the horse-poor Cree and Assiniboin were the aggressors in their conflicts with the Blackfoot.

The origin of only one intertribal war involving the Blackfoot has been adequately documented. Its cause can be traced directly to the practice of raiding for horses. Prior to 1861 the Blackfoot and Gros Ventres had been allies. In the fall of that year a Pend d'Oreille raiding party stole horses from the Gros Ventres on the Missouri below Fort Benton. To throw their pursuers off their track the clever Pend d'Oreille left some of the stolen horses in the vicinity of a Piegan camp on the Marias. The Gros Ventres, in hot pursuit, found some of their horses near the Piegan, concluded that a party of that tribe had stolen them, and attacked the Piegan camp. In this action a Piegan chief is said to have been killed, and the Piegan were roused
175 to retaliation against the Gros Ventres. Thereafter, despite a record
of more than a century of peaceful relations prior to the misunder-
646 standing, the Piegan and Gros Ventres were at war. Their warfare
721 continued sporadically, with considerable loss of life on both sides, until the middle 1880's, in spite of repeated Government attempts to negotiate a peace between these former allies (Bradley, 1923, pp. 313-315; Curtis, 1928, vol. 18, p. 177; and informants).

175 721 648 728

The influence of horse raiding as an obstacle to the making and maintenance of peace between warring tribes can be documented from the literature. Accounts of the Blackfoot written in the 19th century tell of at least a dozen truces negotiated between Blackfoot tribes and one or more of the neighboring tribes with whom they had been at war. The longest peaceful period was the Kutenai-Piegan peace noted by Thompson (1916, pp. 389–382). He claimed it endured for 10 years prior to 1808. In the spring of 1808, a Piegan war party crossed the Rockies, stole 35 Kutenai horses and killed a Kutenai in the action. Thompson (ibid., p. 389) commented significantly, "thus is war continued for want of the old Men being able to govern the young Men." The shortest recorded peace was that between the Crow and Blackfoot attested at the 1855 Blackfoot Treaty Council. Agent Hatch reported that a Blood Indian war party went against the Crow less than 10 days after that treaty was signed (U. S. Comm. Ind. Affairs, 1856, p. 626). That same treaty proclaimed peace between the Blackfoot tribes and Flathead by common agreement among the chiefs in attendance. Apparently that peace was effective for more than 18 months. Father Hoecken, writing from the Flathead country in April 1857, expressed fear that it would not last (De Smet, 1905, vol. 4, pp. 1247–1248). In the early summer of 1860, Major Owen, trader among the Flathead, stated flatly, "since the treaty of '55 the Blackfoot have made frequent predatory excursions to the different Camps from (on) this Side and have run off many horses" (Owen, 1927, vol. 2, p. 215). In 1858 Cree and Blackfoot leaders tried to arrange a truce in their long warfare. Their efforts were nipped in the bud by Cree young men who could not resist the temptation to run off Blackfoot horses (Hind, 1860, pp. 253–262).

648 178

Throughout the century prior to 1885, peace between the Blackfoot tribes and their neighbors (other than Sarsi and Gros Ventres) was the exception, war the rule. Peaceful periods were brief interludes between hostilities. They were always of uncertain duration and usually short lived. Older and wiser men, tired of continual warfare, sought peace in good faith. But ambitious young men, needing horses to gain a degree of economic security, social prestige, and political recognition, negated the best efforts of their peace-minded chiefs through resumption of raiding. Enduring peace with neighboring tribes was impossible until after the Blackfoot passed from a mobile, buffalo-hunting economy to a sedentary life based primarily upon the issuance of Government rations and secondarily upon the raising of livestock other than horses. This change did not take place until after the buffalo was exterminated.

THE HORSE IN TRADE

439 Let us examine the frequently repeated generality that the horse
was the standard of value in the barter of the Plains Indians in
436 historic times, as it applied to the Blackfoot tribes.

231

INTERTRIBAL TRADE

References to Blackfoot trade in horses with alien tribes are
175 exceedingly rare in the literature. Teit (1930, p. 358) obtained
439 traditions from the Flathead to the effect that "long ago" they traded
watertight baskets, shells, pipes, pipestone, flat wallets, and horses,
231 and probably bows and saddles to the Blackfoot. In the fall of 1846, Father De Smet made a peace between the Flathead and Piegan. During the brief period this peace was in effect there apparently was considerable trade between the two tribes. Father Nicholas Point, who remained with the Blackfoot for several months after conclusion of the peace, made a drawing of Blackfoot-Flathead trading operations, the original of which is in the collections of the Jesuit Provincial House, St. Louis, Mo. In October 1858, the River Crow, temporarily at peace with the Piegan, visited the Piegan camp to trade (Hamilton, 1900, pp. 63–64). Doubtless horses were exchanged at that time.

However, it is certain that the Blackfoot engaged in no extensive, annual intertribal horse-trading activities such as were typical of the Crow and village tribes on the Upper Missouri in the early years of
[648] the 19th century. (See pp. 7–8.) Blackfoot hostility to nearly all neighboring tribes made regular, large-scale trading operations impossible.

Nevertheless, fractions of the Piegan appear to have traded fairly
439 regularly with the Flathead from at least as early as the 1840's, when the visits of "Blackfeet" Indians to the Flathead were noted by Catholic missionaries at St. Mary's, on the Bitterroot. These Piegan were primarily members of the Small Robes band, a group traditionally friendly to the Flathead, despite the hostility of other Piegan bands toward that tribe (Ewers, 1946, pp. 398–401). Individuals from other Piegan bands, some of whom had intermarried with Flathead, joined them on their journeys over the mountains. The friendly Piegan, informants said, had scouts out ahead to inform the Flathead of the approach of friendly Indians. Sometimes the Flathead repaid the

541 season. Lazy Boy claimed the Piegan began racing horses in his
great-grandfather's time, soon after they acquired their first horses.

175 The earliest description of a Blackfoot horse race refers to one held
in the combined Blackfoot, Blood, Piegan, Sarsi, and Gros Ventres
541 camp, seen by Paul Kane on June 1, 1848 (Kane, 1925, pp. 295–296).
Kane's painting of that race, now in the Royal Ontario Museum of Archeology, is reproduced as plate 13, *b*.[A] The trader William T. Hamilton briefly described a match race between horses of the Crow and Piegan witnessed by him in 1858 (Hamilton, 1900, pp. 66–68). J. Willard Schultz described a match race between horses owned by Piegan and Kutenai ca. 1878 (Schultz, 1907, pp. 134–136). These descriptions are exceedingly fragmentary compared with the wealth of detailed information on old-time Blackfoot horse racing supplied by my informants.

RACE HORSES

231 A winning race horse was the most valuable horse a Blackfoot
Indian could own. In trade a fast race horse would bring several other
541 good horses. Nearly all racers were males, either stallions or geldings. Because courses were generally long, horses were not raced until their third or fourth year. Racers were considered in their prime from their fourth to ninth year. After that they would serve as buffalo runners for a number of years. The ideal race horse was an animal of small size and unprepossessing appearance, whose speed and endurance belied its looks. Indians liked to match a horse of this description, whose ability was not generally known, against a large, finer appearing animal, in the hope of encouraging their rivals to bet heavily and to win large stakes for themselves.

Men carefully watched boys riding year-old colts chasing buffalo calves. If they saw a colt that seemed to outdistance the others they examined it carefully. If they thought it had possibilities of becoming a good racer they trained it until it was ready to race at 3 or 4 years. The potential racer was allowed to run with the range herd much of
[784] the time. It was not used for general riding or packing. There was a
decided taboo against packing meat or getting blood on a race horse.

INTRATRIBAL AND INTERTRIBAL HORSE RACES

541 Although the Blackfoot participated in both intratribal and inter-
[648] tribal horse races in buffalo days those races best remembered, and
probably most common, were the ones between two societies of the
[575] same tribe. Generally men of the same society did not race against
each other, even though several men of a society might own fast horses.
[628] Intertribal races were held between the Blackfoot tribes (such as
Piegan contra Blood), or between the fastest Blackfoot-owned racer
[648] and the swiftest horse owned by a neighboring non-Blackfoot tribe.

[A] [See category 541, p. 358-L--Analyst]

HORSE RACES BETWEEN BLACKFOOT TRIBES

541 Lazy Boy described a race between horses owned by a Piegan and a Blood Indian which was run in his youth:

> 628 A Blood Indian who owned a fast race horse named Almost Baldy wanted to challenge Burnt-a-Tree-Down, a Piegan owner of a fast racer, Little Buckskin. The Blood rode up to Burnt-a-Tree-Down's lodge and fired at the lodgepoles above the crossing. Burnt-a-Tree-Down told Big Snake, the camp announcer, to tell the Blood Indian he would race next day. The following morning Big Snake announced the race to the whole camp, which at that time included both Piegan and visiting Bloods. Two men were assigned to arrange the bets. As they were made, the announcer called them out. All bets were between individuals. Horses, guns, robes, and other articles were wagered. Then the contestants agreed upon the course and distance. They raced beside a big lake. About the center of the length of the course were stationed a Blood and a Piegan horseman on a hill. Each had a gun. As the riders passed them the Blood fired his gun as a signal to the watchers that the Blood horse, Almost Baldy, was in the lead. As soon as the gun was fired the Piegan jockey, who had been holding his horse in check, let Little Buckskin go. There were one Blood and one Piegan judge at the finish. But there was nothing to judge. Little Buckskin was far ahead. We Piegans took everything from the Bloods. We were sure happy after that race.

This description indicates that in the intertribal horse races involving only Blackfoot tribes the procedure was like that of the intersociety races, previously described, and with which members of all Blackfoot tribes were familiar.

OTHER INTERTRIBAL HORSE RACES IN WHICH BLACKFOOT PARTICIPATED

541 648 Horse races pitting the best Blackfoot-owned horse against the best racer of a neighboring non-Blackfoot tribe were not common in buffalo days, due primarily to the traditional hostility of the Blackfoot toward their neighbors. No detailed descriptions of these races were obtained from informants. Lazy Boy mentioned a race between a horse owned by visiting Nez Percé and the best Piegan racer in which the latter was beaten handily. He thought the Nez Percé horse was the swiftest one he had ever seen.

The two contemporary descriptions of intertribal races in which the Blackfoot participated are brief. Hamilton (1900, pp. 66–68) witnessed a race between Crow and Piegan in 1858. Betting was heavy in ponies and robes. The course was about a half mile in length. Horses were held at the head by men on the ground until the starting signal was given. Jockeys were boys "stripped naked." Little Dog, the Piegan Chief and a Crow chief were the judges. The Piegan won the race and the Crow "departed soon after the race, sullen and silent. All the young Piegans had a great time dancing and singing that night until a late hour." [525] [291]

541 Schultz (1907, pp. 134–136) described a match race between a
648 Piegan-owned horse and one belonging to a Kutenai in the summer
ca. 1878. The betting was excessive, horses bet against each other
[525] being held by some nonbetting boy. The course was a level stretch of
[291] about 500 yards. The youthful jockeys, naked except for the breechclout, raced from a standing start across a finish line marked by a furrow scraped across the dusty course. The horses finished in a dead heat and precipitated a fight, both Piegan and Kutenai claiming they had won.

These two cases suggest that intertribal horse races were not conducive to friendly relations between the tribes involved. In most respects the race procedure appears to have been similar to that of the intratribal Blackfoot races. However, the standing start was not typical of the latter races, and the distances run appear to have been shorter than was usual in intratribal races.

LATER HISTORY OF BLACKFOOT HORSE RACING

541 The popular intersociety horse races ended with the breakdown of
575 the Blackfoot men's societies in the 1870's. Curtis (1911, vol. 6, pp.
20–29) reported that with the exception of the Raven Bearers and
178 the Brave (or Crazy) Dogs all Piegan societies became ceremonially
[525] inactive before 1880. In 1894, Captain Cooke, Acting Agent, Blackfeet Reservation, Mont., reported that he had prohibited gambling
among the Indians in his charge and had discouraged "other pernicious
practices, such as horse racing" (U. S. Comm. Ind. Affairs, 1894, p.
541 159). However, this did not put a stop to Blackfoot horse racing. Informants remembered a number of exciting match races in the early years of this century, and McClintock witnessed horse races in the Sun Dance encampment of the Piegan prior to 1910 (McClintock, 1910, p. 278).

In recent years horse races have appeared on the program of the Blackfeet Rodeo at Browning each July. In the summer of 1941, during my residence at Browning, a new oval track was built at the rodeo grounds immediately west of the Museum property. Horse races were held each day of the rodeo. So popular were these races that in succeeding years race meets were held on the same grounds on Memorial Day and again on Labor Day, as well as during the July rodeo period. The spring and fall races were attended primarily by Indians, who showed marked enthusiasm for them. However, the older men among my informants opined that the horses were not as fast as they used to be in their youth. Frank Red Crow had the same opinion of race horses on the Blood Reserve in recent years. "They are too big. Their legs are too heavy."

526 231 178 pole game was a historic modification of a game played by the Blackfoot before the introduction of horses.[72]

SHAM BATTLES

541 [648] In buffalo days Blackfoot warriors on horseback performed sham battles as entertainment for visiting Indians and important Whites. Sir Cecil Denny described the sham battle that followed the making of the Blackfoot Treaty in Canada in 1877, which was so realistic as to cause considerable trepidation among the white officials present.

> The Indians had been in a state of excitement all the morning, and while we were atending to our duties five or six hundred mounted warriors, stripped with the exception of a blanket round the loins and in war paint and feather headdresses, staged a mounted war-dance round our camp. These men armed with loaded Winchesters and on the dead run, circled the tents, their rifles exploding and the bullets whistling over our heads. The blood-curdling whoops accentuated the unpleasantness.
>
> They were only half in fun, and had fear been shown by us it is hard to tell what would have occurred; the sham battle might easily have become one of grim earnestness. [Denny, 1939, p. 117-118.]

Capt. W. P. Clark (1885, p. 68) witnessed a Piegan sham battle in the summer of 1881, which "consisted in circling, charging, shouting, firing of guns etc." Sham battles survived as spectacles in the summer Sun Dance encampments of the Piegan after the end of intertribal warfare. McClintock (1910, pp. 277-278) observed and described this mock warfare in the first decade of the present century.

Undoubtedly these dramatic displays afforded active warriors considerable personal satisfaction in showing off their best horses and their own skill as horsemen as well as their fine costumes and [171] [648] athletic ability. Sham battles were common to many, if not all of the Plains tribes as means of entertaining and impressing visiting Indians and Whites in buffalo days.[73]

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[171] [72] Culin (1907, pp. 420-527) has indicated the very wide distribution of the hoop and pole game among the North American Indians, another suggestion of its antiquity. He does not mention horse symbolism in this game. Ferris (1940, pp. 94-95) said the Flathead employed a small hoop "two or three inches in diameter, having beads of various colors fastened to the inside" in their hoop and pole game prior to 1835. He did not mention the significance of the colored beads.

[73] The earliest reference I have found to a Plains Indian sham battle appears in Alexander Henry's account of his visit to the Mandan in the summer of 1806. "The Mandanes assembled in great numbers on horseback, and rode about three miles below the village, where all mustered. They set out in a body, pell-mell, whipping and kicking their horses, directing their courses along the foot of the hills, and made a long circuit at full speed around the village. . . . On their arrival they performed their warlike maneuvers on horseback, feigning their different attacks upon the enemy, giving their strokes of the battle axe and thrusts of the spear, and defending themselves in turn by parrying blows and covering themselves with their shields" (Henry and Thompson, 1897, vol. 1., pp. 362-368). George Catlin was much impressed by the sham battles he witnessed during his travels among the Plains Indians. He described a sham battle executed by Crow warriors on their visit to the Hidatsa in the summer of 1832, and made a sketch of one of the participants in full dress mounted on a richly decorated horse. Two years later he saw a similar performance in the Comanche village visited by Col. Dodge's dragoons (Catlin, 1841, vol. 1, pp. 191-193, pl. 76; vol. 2, pp. 65-66).

The tendency for the head chieftaincy to run in families has been 619
more marked among the Blood Indians. Since ante-1869 the tribal
head chieftaincy has descended in the family of Seen-from-Afar and 622
Red Crow to the present (1951) chief, Shot-on-Both-Sides. Weasel Tail claimed that Buffalo Back Fat, head chief of the Blood Indians in 1832, fathered another tribal head chief who bore the same name.

It is certain that the head chief rose to office through distinction gained as a prominent band chief. The basic requirements of outstanding war record and generosity, therefore, were essential to his advancement.

Blackfoot recognition of social status upon the basis of horse owner- 648
ship served indirectly to limit the power of both tribal and band
chiefs in intertribal relations. Older chiefs, who had amassed con- 622
siderable wealth, and who no longer went to war themselves, would 556
lose more than they could gain through continued warfare. Often they looked with favor upon peace with some neighboring tribe. But their desires were thwarted by ambitious young men who could not be deterred from horse raids against the neighboring tribes in order to gain status for themselves. Father Point (in 1847) found Piegan young men willing to listen to his exhortations to cease stealing from neighboring tribes only if he "could immediately make 'Great Men' of them" (De Smet, 1905, vol. 3, p. 954).

MARRIAGE

The institution of marriage among the Blackfoot offered men of 582
wealth opportunities for wide selection of women for wives, while the
marital opportunities of the poor were restricted. A boy of a poor 556
family, who was not very ambitious, had little chance of marriage except to a girl of his own social class. However, the father of a girl of rather loose morals, "who chased around with one fellow after another," might tell her, "You marry that poor fellow, and settle down." There were also orphan girls in camp, some of whom were flighty in their affections, available to marry poor boys. On the whole marriages tended to be contracted between persons of nearly equal status. A poor young man who had been successful in amassing a herd of 8 or 10 horses might be recognized as a young man with a future and might marry into a family of higher status. On the other hand, a wealthy man was besieged with offers of the daughters of ambitious parents of lower status.

Informants resented any implication of bride purchase in the Black- 583
foot marriage ceremony, insisting there was an exchange of gifts
between the families of the bride and groom. This exchange of gifts 585
has been mentioned in accounts of Blackfoot marriage by Bradley 431

9: Ewers E,G-4,5 (1941-1951) 1955 NF6 Blackfoot NF6

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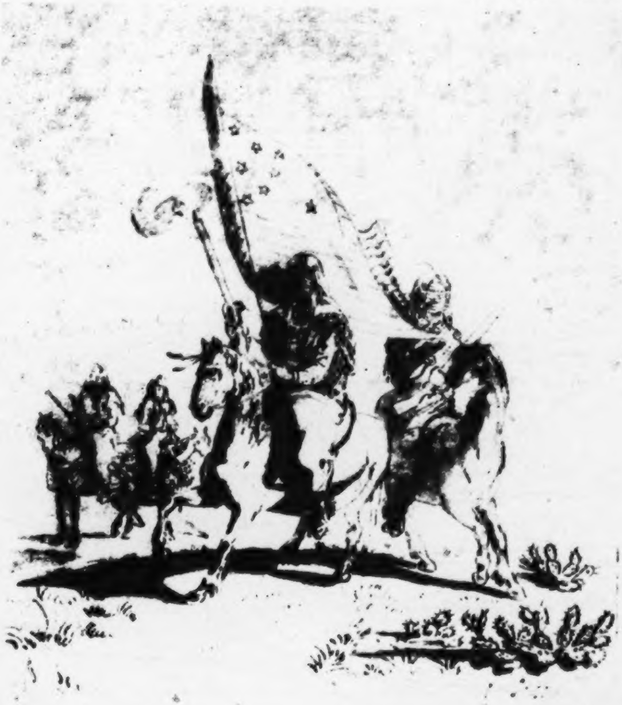

"The Bloods Come in Council." Pencil sketch by Gustavus Sohon in 1855, showing horse equipment of the period. (U. S. National Museum.)

[p. 358-c]

121 mercialism that became part of their values to be explained solely in terms
177 of the horse? Is the horse alone responsible for the rapid spread and uni-
231 formity of Plains culture, or did the fur trade also play a part in this
process? These and related problems will be treated in this study.

121 One other aspect of our work, related more directly to problems of accul-
177 turation, must be pointed out here. The unique geographical position of
the Blackfoot tribes, situated as they were on both sides of the international
131 line, subjected them to two influences, a Canadian and an American. This
first presented itself in the differences in policy and character of the Cana-
439 dian and American fur companies, and it continued in the differences in
● 648 the pre-reserve treatment of the Indians by the Canadian and American
governments. Finally, it manifested itself in the post reserve adjustments
in Canada and in the United States.

121 While these conditions make a study of Blackfoot acculturation more complicated, they also make it more useful in that we can trace the role of the differential factors in Canada and in the United States and evaluate their effects upon the Blackfoot. In this paper, we shall study these effects up to the reserve period.

movements in the historic period as gleaned from the early literature. 175
However, our problem is further complicated by the evidence from tribes 174
to the west and southwest as given by Teit.[33] This indicates that the Flat- 131
head and Kutenai who lived east of the mountains, carried on trade with [439]
the Blackfoot in the pre-horse period.[34] As we have seen, early western
contact of the Blackfoot has also been suggested by the linguistic similari- [177]
ties to the Kutenai referred to above.

Although the western limits of the Blackfoot are not clearly defined for 175
this early period, a review of the literature enables us to reconstruct a 131
general picture of tribal locations in this area in the pre-white period.

We know that the Piegan were being hard pressed by the Shoshones who were to the South and west along the Red Deer River.[35] Further to the southwest were the Kutenai, in the valley of the Belly River, while below them were the Pend d'Oreilles and Flathead.[36] David Thompson (1787) writes, from Piegan country near the present Calgary,

> All these Plains, which are now the hunting ground of the above Indians (Blackfoot), were formerly in full possession of the Kootenaes, northward; the next the Saleesh and their allies, and the most southern the Snake Indians."[37]

This agrees to a remarkable degree with Piegan tradition as recorded by [173]
Wissler over 110 years later, and also with that of Teit for the Flathead.
To the east and north were the Cree and Assiniboine, while the Gros [101]
Ventre were south of the main Saskatchewan and east of the South Saskat-
chewan. (See Map A.)

Within the short period from 1730 to 1745 the old habitat and tribal
locations in the northern Plains were changed. The Blackfoot received their [177]
first horses from the Shoshone in 1730, and at about the same time ob- [41]
tained firearms and iron from the Cree and Assiniboine. Thus armed with
the gun and iron for their arrows, and aided by a small-pox epidemic among [648] ●
the Shoshone, the Blackfoot with the aid of the Assiniboine and Cree,
defeated the Shoshone at about 1733, and initiated a period of great expan-
sion to the west and southwest. Again, Thompson explains a good deal of
this.

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[33] Teit, *Salishan Tribes of the Western Plateau*, pp. 304, 358.

[34] Turney-High's material does not fit in with this picture since he contends that the Flathead crossed the mountains for their seasonal buffalo hunts only after they had acquired the horse. See the Flathead of Montana, *Memoirs of the American Anthropological Association*, No. 48.

[35] Thompson, *op. cit.*, p. 330.

[36] Teit, *op. cit.*, pp. 304, 305.

[37] Thompson, *op. cit.*, p. 328. This agrees with Wissler's information from the Piegan. See Wissler, *op. cit.*, p. 17.

In their push from the North Saskatchewan near the Eagle Hills, southwestward to the waters of the South Saskatchewan, they drove the Snakes and Kutenai west of the mountains. The Piegan as the frontier tribe led in this movement. They took possession of the Bow River, and south along

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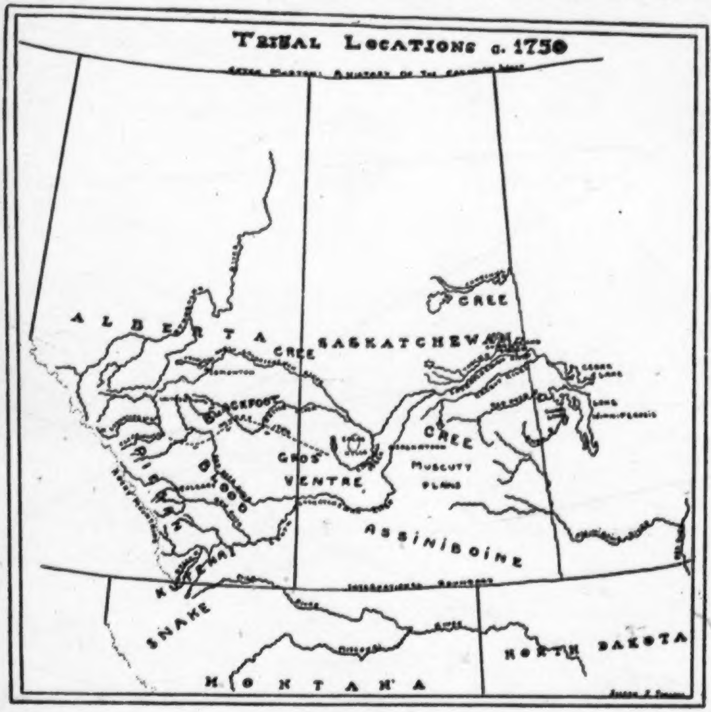
[648]●


TRIBAL LOCATIONS c. 1750
ALBERTA
CREE
SASKATCHEWAN
CREE
BLACKFOOT
PIEGAN
BLOOD
GROS VENTRE
CREE
MUSCUTY PLAINS
ASSINIBOINE
KUTENAI
SNAKE
MONTANA
NORTH DAKOTA

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MAP B

the foothills. The Blood came to the present Red Deer River, and the Blackfoot proper to the upper waters of the Battle River, south of Edmonton.[39] During this time the Sarsi joined the Blackfoot and were at the

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[39] *Morton, A History of the Canadian West to 1870-71....Toronto and New-York,* n.d., p. 19.

[113]

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175 North Saskatchewan. The Gros Ventre, driven by the Cree and Assiniboine,
131 occupied the vacancy left by the Blackfoot.[40] The Cree pushed farther west
along the wooded country of the North Saskatchewan.[41] (See Map B.)

Still another great movement of the Blackfoot took place. This was the
southern movement from the Bow River down to the Missouri and even as
far as the mouth of the Yellowstone. This probably occurred about 1750-
1770 or earlier. When Thompson met the Piegan in 1787 he said that they
were formerly on the Bow River, but now extended southward to the
Missouri. The reasons for this southern movement were probably to obtain
[721] horses from the Flathead, and to find better buffalo country. The whole
country along the eastern foot of the Rockies north of the Yellowstone was
now in possession of the Blackfoot, who extended their war expeditions west
of the Divide, penetrating far into Flathead, Nez Perce and even Kalispel
country.[42]

175 According to Flathead tradition, it was at about this time (1750), that
the Crow were first heard of on the Plains, advancing from the east and
fighting the Shoshone, whom they drove out of the Yellowstone River
175 country. With this dislocation of tribes, the tribal relationships changed.
•648 In 1730, the Blackfoot were the allies of the Assiniboine and Cree, to whom
they had applied for aid against the Snakes. Again, in 1774, Cocking speaks
of the Blackfoot and Assiniboine as being friendly. Until 1800, there is no
evidence of Cree hostility. But as the Crees were pushed west with the
exhaustion of the woodland food and fur supply, they forged out into the
Plains and encroached upon Blackfoot territory. The once peaceful western
plains now became a scene of continued bloody warfare that was to last
until the reserve period.

Summary

174 Our tentative findings can be summed up as follows. The linguistic and
177 cultural affiliations of the Blackfoot do not give us sufficient evidence to
determine their early locations. The Blackfoot were in contact with tribes
to the east and west for over a hundred years in the historic period, and
[197] have borrowed cultural items from both sources. The linguistic similarities
to the Kutenai presents an important problem. Whether this similarity
is to be explained as a result of borrowing within this hundred year period
cannot be determined, and must be left to the linguists for solution. How-
175 ever, the historical material is clear. About 1730 the Piegan, as the frontier
131 tribe of the Blackfoot, were on the Plains of the Eagle Hills in Saskatche-
wan, a distance of over 400 miles from the Rocky Mountains. Presumably,

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[40] *Ibid.*, p. 19. Also Margry, *Decouvertes*, VI, p. 598.

[41] Morton, *op. cit.*, p. 19.

[42] Teit, *op. cit.*, p. 318.

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175 same river.[50] These posts were still outside of Blackfoot country and we have no records of trade with the Blackfoot.

175 177 439 With the formation of the Northwest Company in 1784, the Hudson's Bay Company renewed its efforts to establish its trade with the Blackfoot. David Thompson with a party of six was sent out for this purpose. In October 1787, Thompson set out to find the Piegan, "... to induce them to hunt for furs, and make dried provisions; to get as many as possible to come to the houses to trade, and to trade the furs of those that would not come."[51] Thompson wintered with the Piegan near the present site of Calgary, and while he gathered much valuable ethnographical data, his trading mission was not entirely successful. The trading posts were still too far outside of Blackfoot country; the nearest post at this time was South Branch House built in 1785 on the South Saskatchewan at Gardipuys Crossing on the border of the woods and Plains.

175 439 Trading posts were finally established within easy reach of the Blackfoot. In 1794, Fort Augustus was built on the South Saskatchewan with the object of drawing the Blood and Piegan southward.[52] Blackfoot country was now surrounded by a ring of posts belonging to both companies. (See Map C.)

Blackfoot Relations with Traders

175 648 Until this point the relations between the Blackfoot and whites were perfectly friendly. Henday, Pressick, Cocking, Thompson and others had wintered with the Blackfoot and had returned unharmed and undespoiled. However, beaver were becoming scarce east of the mountains and the Northwest Company once more had to expand westward. The agents of this company began to make overtures to the Kutenai, the enemies of the Blackfoot. The Piegan, who were the frontier tribe and who would bear the brunt of a strengthened Kutenai, sensed the danger at once.[53] Earlier the Kutenai had made several attempts to reach Fort George on the upper Saskatchewan but were prevented by the Piegan. M'Gillivray's journal of 1795 tells of the Kutenai trying to force their way through Blackfoot territory and attempting to bribe them with horses, but in vain.[54] The Blackfoot also succeeded in preventing the Salish and Pend d'Oreille from establishing contact with the Canadian posts until 1806, and forced the

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[50] Thompson, *op. cit.*, p. 318.

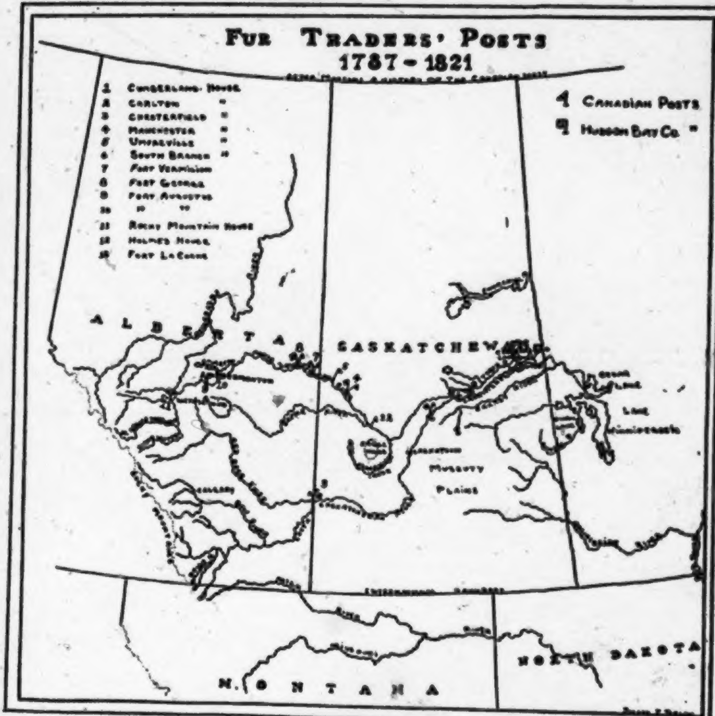
[51] *Ibid.*, p. 324.

[52] Morton, *op. cit.*, p. 511.

[53] Thompson, *op. cit.*, p. 375.

[54] A. S. Morton, *The Journal of Duncan M'Gillivray*, p. 56.

western tribes to trade in a roundabout way through the Mandan and Hidatsa to the South.[35] 175 648


FUR TRADERS' POSTS
1787 - 1821
1 Cumberland House
2 Carlton "
3 Chesterfield "
4 Manchester "
5 Umfreville "
6 South Branch "
7 Fort Vermilion
8 Fort George
9 Fort Augustus
10 " "
11 Rocky Mountain House
12 Holmes House
13 Fort La Corne
Canadian Posts
Hudson Bay Co. "
ALBERTA
SASKATCHEWAN
Lake Winnipegosis
Muskety Plains
MONTANA
NORTH DAKOTA

102
439
175

Map C

In 1805, Thompson attempted to cross the mountains but was stopped by the Piegan, the same people who had befriended him in 1787.[36] It was 175 648

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[35] F. Laroque, *Journal*, edited by L. P. Burpee (Canadian Archives Ottowa, 1911), p. 72.

[36] Thompson, *op. cit.*, p. 375.

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175 648 not until 1807 that he managed to get across. He explains, "The murder of two Peeagan Indians by Captain Lewis of the U. S. drew the Peeagans to the Missouri to avenge their deaths; and thus gave me an opportunity to cross the mountains by the defiles of the Saskatchewan River which led to the headwaters of the Columbia River."[57] Thompson descended the Columbia and built the first Kutenai trading post. A few months later the Piegan returned from the south and learned of Kutenai House. The civil chief of the Piegan advised the formation of a strong war party to immediately crush the whites and natives to the west of the mountains before they became too well armed. Said the chief,

> "They (Kutenai) have always been our slaves, and now they will pretend to equal us—we must destroy them before they become too powerful for us . . ."[58]

A war party of 300 men was formed to destroy the Kutenai post. Thompson was in serious danger but he succeeded in buying them off by sending large gifts of tobacco and pipes to the leader of the war party.[59] However, the barrier of the Piegan had important historical significance since it delayed Thompson long enough to allow the Astor party to reach Oregon first and establish a prior claim which won the Columbia valley for the Americans.[60]

175 648 177 Within a few years after the expansion of the fur trade across the Rockies, the balance of power among the Indian tribes had shifted. The apprehensions of the Piegan concerning the arming of the tribes to the west were indeed well founded. Formerly, the Kalispel, Spokane, Flathead and Kutenai were the easy prey of the Blackfoot. Now, supplied with firearms, they had become formidable enemies. In the summer of 1810 the Piegan suffered their first defeat at the hands of the Kutenai and Flathead, who were as well armed as they.[61] This defeat increased the hostility of the Piegan towards the whites. The Piegan would have attempted vengeance, but feared such action would deprive them of further ammunition and supplies, now doubly needed against their newly armed enemies.[62]

175 648 439 The relations of the Blackfoot to the tribes to the east were also affected by the Canadian fur trade. A special grievance against the traders was the belief that they were partial to the Crees, and to all appearances were more liberal in arming them.[63] To understand the seriousness of this from the

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[57] *Idem.*

[58] *Ibid.*, p. 381.

[59] *Ibid.*, p. 383.

[60] Morton, *op. cit.*, p. 491.

[61] Thompson, *op. cit.*, p. 424.

[62] Alexander Henry and David Thompson, *Manuscript Journals*, p. 583.

[63] *Journal of Duncan M'Gillivray, op. cit.*, p. 31.

point of view of the Blackfoot, we must remember that the differences in 175
the rate of arming of the various tribes was crucial in determining the 648
balance of power in this area. Here the Cree, specialists in beaver trapping, 439
had a great advantage over the Plains Indians whose wolves and foxes were relatively worthless. This was another potent source of hostility against the whites on the part of the Blackfoot tribes, once the Cree began their incursions into Blackfoot territory. However, except for a few instances, peace was maintained at the posts.[64]

Trading at the posts continued but in an atmosphere of greater tension. The journal of Alexander Henry, the younger, under date of 1810 states, "The natives have become so troublesome that we find it is necessary to keep them at a distance while at our establishment and not allow them to come in numbers inside our principal fort."[65] The cannon in the bastion of the forts were kept ready for action, and men were stationed with loaded muskets in the sentinels gallery that surrounded the palisade when the Blackfoot came to trade. Sometimes strong arm men were on hand to administer beatings to the Indians who were suspected of making trouble.[66]

The rivalry between the Hudson's Bay Company and its competitors 175
led the former to abandon its old policy of keeping intoxicating drink from 439
the Indians, and by the time the posts were in Blackfoot country the 273
Hudson's Bay Company traded liquor as freely as the others. Liquor soon supplanted other goods in desirability and became the most important single item in the trade. It provided the Blackfoot with their greatest incentive to trap. But if the liquor trade was profitable it was also dangerous. The Blackfoot were a numerous people, conscious of their power and especially violent when drunk. Consequently, the whiskey served to them was more diluted than that traded to the neighboring tribes. Whereas they would mix one part 'high wine' to three or four parts of water for the Cree and Assiniboine, they added seven or eight parts of water for the Blackfoot and it became known as 'Blackfoot rum'.[67]

In 1821 the struggle between the Hudson's Bay Company and the North- 175
west Company came to an end when both companies united under the 439
name of the former. This had a very wholesome effect upon the Indians.
The immediate effect was to cut down the sale of liquor to the Blackfoot to (273)
a minimum, and to stabilize the fur trade. The relations between the company and the Blackfoot Indians during this period became routine and

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[64] In 1807 a Blood band under Old Swan pillaged and burned Ft. Augustus, and in the forties Old Fort Bow was destroyed. See Thompson, *op. cit.*, p. xc, and Katherine Hughes, *Father Lacombe*, p. 61.

[65] Henry and Thompson, *op. cit.*, p. 545.

[66] M'Gillivray, *op. cit.*, p. 46.

[67] Henry and Thompson, *op. cit.*, p. 544.

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IV. HISTORY OF THE AMERICAN FUR TRADE WITH THE BLACKFOOT

Hostility of Blackfoot

The first Americans to cross Blackfoot country were the members of the 175
Lewis and Clark expedition in 1806. Through an unfortunate misunderstanding 648
they killed two Piegan Indians. The journals of Lewis and Clark state that two Gros Ventres were killled. However, according to David Thompson, the Piegan went south in 1807 to avenge the deaths of the Piegan killed by Lewis. This was later confirmed by Dr. Clark Wissler who unequivocally established the fact that it was two Piegan who were killed. It is certain this episode did not make for friendly feelings towards the whites.

Shortly after the return of the Lewis and Clark expedition, the American 175
fur trade was brought to the southern limits of Blackfoot country by Man- 439
uel Lisa, who settled at the junction of the Yellowstone and Big Horn 648
Rivers in 1807–1808.[69] He and his men were unmolested until a member of his party, Coulter, was found in a Crow camp by a Blackfoot war party. Coulter aided the Crow against the attack and killed a number of Blackfoot. The latter now considered the whites as allies of their enemies and treated them accordingly. The next time they met a party of whites the Blackfoot attacked.[70] In 1810 Lisa built a fort at the mouth of the Big Horn River. It was attacked and destroyed by the Blackfoot and thirty whites were killed.[71]

When the St. Louis-Missouri Fur Company was organized in 1808, it 175
sent out a party of 150 trappers to the rich beaver country at the forks of 648
the Missouri.[72] The Blackfoot considered this an encroachment of their hunting grounds and attacked them. Again in 1810–1811 trappers were attacked by the Blood and Blackfoot "who hung about constantly in the neighborhood attacking every party."[73] The trappers now armed themselves and kept up a continual warfare with the Indians. For protection

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[69] Hiram M. Chittendon, *The American Fur Trade of the Far West*, Vol. 1, p. 137; See also *American State Papers*, Vol. 2, p. 201–202 (1834).

[70] *American State Papers, op. cit., idem.*

[71] *Idem.*

[72] Chittendon, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 142.

[73] *Ibid.*, p. 330.

175 independent trappers traveled with the Nez Perce and Flathead, the tradi-
648 tional enemies of the Blackfoot, thus aggravating the situation.

The Blackfoot found a further powerful incentive to attack the trappers
175 in the promise of rich loot in valuable beaver skins and horses which they
648 speedily and profitably disposed of at the Canadian trading posts. An
439 account of a raid by the Bloods in 1810 near the three forks of the Missouri
tells of the variety of goods they carried off.

> ". . . fine cotton shirts, beaver traps, hats, knives, handkerchiefs, Russia sheeting tents, and a number of bank notes, some signed New York and Trenton Banking Company."[74]

The journals of the Canadian traders reveal that they were aware of the manner in which the Blackfoot had acquired their beaver, for at this time, the Blackfoot still did little beaver trapping of their own. The Missouri River traders attributed much of the Indian hostility to the instigation of the Canadians. However this may be, it is certain that the Blackfoot needed little encouragement, for raiding for loot fitted in well with their own war patterns.

Up to 1831, the Blackfoot successfully prevented the establishment of trading posts in their territory in the United States, and they twice drove out agents of the Missouri Fur Company. It is not clear from the records whether or not the Piegan took part in these raids, but it is probable that they did.[75]

In 1830 Catlin observed,

> "The Blackfoot are, perhaps, the most powerful tribe on the continent and being sensible of their strength have stubbornly resisted the Traders in their country who have been gradually forming an acquaintance and trying to set up a profitable system of trade. The country abounds with beaver and buffalo and others. The American Fur Co. has established itself and white trappers are rapidly destroying the beaver. The Blackfoot have repeatedly informed the traders of the company that if this persists they will kill the trappers. The company lost 15-20 men. The Blackfoot therefore have been less traded with and less seen by whites and less understood."[76]

Establishment of Trading Posts

In 1831 a group of Piegan Indians, acting as delegates of their people, signed a treaty with Mackenzie, the American trader, who promised them a

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[74] *Ibid.*, p. 146.

[75] *Ibid.*, p. 330.

[76] George Catlin, Illustrations of the Manners, Customs and Conditions of the North American Indians, p. 52; in 1834 John Sanford, an Indian agent, reported several Blackfoot chiefs as saying, "If you will send Traders into our country we will protect them and treat them well; but for your Trappers—never." John F. A. Sanford to Gen. Wm. Clark, dated St. Louis, July 26, 1833, Files, United States Indian Office, given in *Chardons Journal at Fort Clark*, edited by A. H. Abel, p. 254.

fort of their own the following year.[77] A fort was finally established in 175
Blackfoot country in 1833 and was called Fort Piegan, for the trade was 648
almost exclusively with the Piegan. This fort was soon burned by a party of 439
Bloods, "who apparently were not aware of the intentions (of the builders). . . ."[78] A year later Fort Mackenzie was built and it continued to operate up to 1844, the longest-lived of the forts.[79]

The setting up of Fort Mackenzie coincided with a great change in the fur trade. Until the 1830's beaver was the most important item in the trade but after that year beaver became scarce. The American Fur Company began an extensive trade in buffalo hides, the most immediate effect of which was to improve their relations with the Blackfoot.

Much of the friendliness which followed was due also to the influence of Alexander Culbertson, agent for the American Fur Company. He had married a Blood woman and had won the complete confidence of the Indians.[80] So long as he was present, there were no hostile incidents, despite
the harrowing experience of a deadly small-pox epidemic in 1837. The 175
disease had broken out on the company's steamer when it was about to 164
deliver a load of goods to the fort. About 500 lodges of Piegan and Blood 731
Indians camped there, awaiting the arrival of the boat. When they were 648
informed by Major Culbertson that the boat must be held up they were 439
displeased and threatened to take it by force. Unable to restrain them, despite warning of the consequences, the boat was allowed to land its supply.[81] For the next two months no Indian came to trade and Culbertson
went out to locate them. He met a ghastly scene of death; thousands had [165]
perished. The disease had spread to Canada and over two thirds (6000) of the Blood and Blackfoot had died.[82]

> "But amid all this misery and depopulation they attached no blame to the whites. They remembered Major Culbertson's remonstrances, and felt they had brought the scourge upon themselves; differing in this respect from the lower Indians who . . . were disposed to sweep the whites out of existence as the authors of their woe."[83]

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[77] Thwaites, *Early Western Travels Vol.* 24, p. 317.

[78] Father Points Journal (1847), Extract reprinted on p. 403 of *Chardon's Journal at Fort Clark, op. cit.*

[79] Chardon's Journal, *op. cit.*, p. 403.

[80] Lieut. James H. Bradley, "Affairs at Fort Benton 1831-1869," *Montana Historical Society, Contributions*, Vol. 3, p. 233.

[81] Chittendon gives a very different slant on this epidemic. He places the responsibility squarely upon the shoulders of the American Fur Co. officials who permitted a Blackfoot Indian to board the steamer at St. Peters at the mouth of the Little Missouri, and then go to his people without finding out whether he had the disease. In this way the disease was spread among the Blackfoot. See Chittendon, *op. cit.*, Vol. 2, p. 626.

[82] Bradley, *op. cit.*, p. 225.

[83] *Ibid.*, p. 226.

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175 In 1842 an unfortunate change took place at the fort. Culbertson was
439 called away and the fort was now placed in the hands of Chardon and
648 Harvey, who promptly attacked a band of Bloods. Chardon and Harvey planned to massacre the Indians in revenge for the death of a colored servant. They invited the unsuspecting Blackfoot to trade and fired into them as they arrived, killing and later scalping thirty Indians.[34] In retaliation the fort was burned and all trading ceased until 1844, when Culbertson was sent back to patch matters up.[35] Culbertson again succeeded in pacifying the Indians and the American Fur Company continued its trade well into the 1870's with but few hostilities.

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[34] Accounts differ as to number of Blackfoot killed. Compare Chittendon, *op. cit.*, pp. 373, 694–695, with Larpenteur, *Forty Years a Fur Trader on the Upper Missouri*, pp. 144, 216.

[35] Bradley, *op. cit.*, pp. 233–237.

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V. COMPARISON OF THE FUR TRADE WITH THE BLACKFOOT IN CANADA AND THE UNITED STATES

The Canadian fur trade with the Blackfoot had been going on for over 175
sixty years before the first American trading post was built in Blackfoot 648
country. The major part of this period was characterized by an absence of
conflict. However, from the start, Blackfoot relations with the whites in the 439
United States were marked by hostility and open conflict. A number of historical factors combined to bring this about.

The first American contact with the Blackfoot came at a most inopportune time. The Blackfoot had just had their first break with the Canadian fur traders in their sixty years of friendly dealings and now looked upon the whites as enemies or allies of enemies. The Piegan had warned the traders that all whites found west of the mountains would be treated as enemies in consequence of their arming the Flathead and Kutenai.[illegible] Undoubtedly they had also meant this to apply to their southern borders. The fact that the first Americans they met were camped with the Crow, who were their enemies, resulted in open hostilities.

More important in explaining the hostility towards the Americans was the policy of the early American fur companies of sending white trappers into Blackfoot country rather than depending upon the Indian supply. The Blackfoot resented this competition of the white trappers and attacked them as trespassers. The Canadian fur companies on the other hand, established trading posts and encouraged the Indians to trap. Furthermore a glance at the map will show that without exception the Canadian trading posts were on the outskirts of Blackfoot territory, and therefore the traders never represented a threat in the eyes of the Blackfoot.

In large measure, the greater harmony in the relations of the Blackfoot and the Canadians as compared with the Americans, was due also to the differences in organization, personnel, and administration of the respective trading companies. The American fur trade reflected the rugged individualism and lack of organization of the newly developing capitalist economy of which it was a part. In contrast, the Hudson's Bay Company with its highly centralized and efficient organization was part of the long established and smoothly functioning British Empire. The Hudson's Bay Com-

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[illegible] Genevieve Murray, "Marias Pass," *Studies in Northwest History*, No. 12, p. 14 (State University of Montana).

175 439 648 pany had years of experience in dealing with Indians and exercised the strictest control over its employees. All Company men were subject to carefully formulated rules governing their personal conduct and their relations with the Indians. The Standing Rules of the Fur Trade summarized the policy of the Company.

> "40th. That the Indians be treated with kindness and indulgence, and mild and conciliatory means resorted to in order to encourage industry, repress vice, and inculcate morality; that the use of spiritous liquors be gradually discontinued in the very few districts in which it is yet indispensible; and that the Indians be liberally supplied with requisite necessaries, particularly with articles of ammunition, whether they have the means of paying for it or not, and that no gentleman in charge of district or post be at liberty to alter or vary the standards or usual mode of trade with the Indians, except by special permission of the Council."[67]

While we can discount the tone of altruism in parts of the above, nevertheless it contrasts sharply with conditions in the American trade which had no such clearly formulated policy towards the Indians. The massacre of Blackfoot by irresponsible representatives, such as occurred on the American side under Chardon, could not have happened in Canada.

175 439 When the traders came to the Canadian northwest they attempted to deal with the Indians of the Plains in the same manner in which they had dealt with the Indians of the forest. That is, they attempted to turn the Plains Indians to large scale trapping of beaver and other small game. In this they met with little success. Among the Blackfoot tribes only a few bands of the Piegan responded to the demands of the traders. These were the bands who lived in the foot-hills of the Rockies and who had always done considerable beaver trapping. The Blood, Siksika, and remaining Piegan, refused to turn to beaver trapping. For a long time the fur trade with the Blackfoot therefore consisted only of wolf and fox skins, both of which the Blackfoot had trapped before the coming of the whites. However, with the expansion of the fur trade the Blackfoot tribes were to play an important though different role. The Plains tribes came to be the chief providers of food for the far-flung fur trade, whose numerous posts extended throughout the Woodland area, the Barren Grounds, and along the Churchill, Columbia and Frazer Rivers.[68] The Blackfoot, because of their control of the rich buffalo grounds became a major source of provisions. The fur traders of the forest regions above the North Saskatchewan depended upon those posts which were supplied with provisions by the Blackfoot, and whenever a shortage of food occurred, sent to them for assistance.

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[67] Report from the Select Committee on Hudson's Bay Co., Appendix No. 2 (D1); *P:P: 1857 (Session 2)*, xv, 224, 260, p. 368.

[68] Harold A. Innis, *The Fur Trade in Canada*, p. 304.

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175 439 The introduction of the steamboat on the Missouri in 1833 gave the American Company a great advantage over its Canadian competitors, who were still relying upon canoes and horses for transportation. Because of the difficulty and expense of transporting the bulky hides, the buffalo trade never reached the proportions in Canada that it did in the United States.

[435] The American Fur Company, because of its advantages in transportation, were able to offer higher prices for buffalo skins. The Blackfoot planned their trading practices to fit in with their seasonal movements in such a way as to obtain the maximum prices for their furs. In the summer, they went north to the Saskatchewan, where the returns for their small peltries were highest; in winter they returned to the Marias River where they traded their buffalo robes with the Americans, who paid better prices.[83]

[431] The differences in the values of the natives and those of the traders were a source of recurring misunderstanding both on the American and Canadian sides. The Blackfoot would not pay for drinks since they considered this "water" as due them out of ordinary hospitality. Henry wrote, "This is the cause of all our misunderstanding with them. They insist upon our treating them with their favorite liquor."[84] Again, when they gave the trader a horse as a gift they expected good payment or angrily demanded the return of the horse.[85]

175 439 273 Liquor was sold to the Blackfoot in both Canada and the United States, though at different periods. In Canada, the sale of liquor was greatest from about 1784 to 1821, when the competition between the Hudson's Bay Company and the Northwest Company was fierce. After the amalgamation of the two companies in 1821, liquor was almost entirely eliminated from the trade. It was at this time, however, that the American trading posts were established in Blackfoot country. With their establishment came the liquor trade on a large scale, with its usual disruptive and demoralizing influences.

175 439 ● 648 To recapitulate, a comparison of the American and Canadian fur trade with the Blackfoot shows important differences in policy towards the Indians by the respective trading companies. This resulted in an initial period of hostility on the American side, in contrast to a long period of friendship with the Canadians. The American trade supplied the Blackfoot, with a market for buffalo robes; the Canadian trade with a market for provisions, horses and small pelts. The presence of competing fur companies

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[83] *Reports of Exploration and Surveys*, U. S. Dept. of War, Vol. 1, p. 444. Report of Doty (1853).

[84] Henry and Thompson, *op. cit.*, p. 723.

[85] *Ibid.*, p. 730.

on both sides of the international line presented the Blackfoot with serious problems of adjustment. 175 439 648

Comparison of the Three Blackfoot Tribes

In our discussion so far we have not pointed to differences among the three Blackfoot tribes, primarily because the early material does not always mention the specific tribe under discussion. While little can be found concerning cultural distinctions, the differences in location of the three tribes and their lack of a common history have resulted in some divergences in their relations with other tribes and in their reactions to the whites. 619 121

The Blood and Siksika, the two northernmost Blackfoot tribes, were throughout their history, more closely united to each other than to the Piegan. This appears to have been true in pre-white times, for the Piegan were the frontier tribe of the westward-moving confederacy, while the Blood and Siksika brought up the rear. 619

The tribes were united before their common enemies, the Shoshone and the Assiniboine, but each had particular enemies against whom they concentrated their efforts. The Piegan defended the western and southern frontiers from the Kutenai, Flathead and Nez Perce; the Blood fought the Crow and, together with the Siksika, the Cree.[96] There are accounts of clashes of interest among the three tribes and of separate treaties and alliances. 619 648

Such a situation occurred in the early part of the nineteenth century after the hostile western tribes had been armed. The Piegan wished to make peace with the Kutenai, who had become a formidable enemy, but the Blood and Siksika, who were protected by the Piegan territory which was a buffer between them and the Kutenai, did not agree. The Kutenai refused an agreement with the Piegan because the latter could not speak for the entire nation and could not guarantee against transgression.[97] 175 648 619

Of the three tribes, the Piegan were the most powerful, warlike and numerous. They were held in awe by the others and, according to Thompson, were the leading group. He believed it would have been more appropriate to speak of the "Piegan Confederacy" than of the "Blackfoot Confederacy."[98] 619

According to Henry, the Piegan— 619 186

> ". . . imagine themselves to be a superior race, braver and more virtuous than their own countrymen whom they always seem to despise for their vicious, treacherous conduct. They are proud and haughty and studiously avoid the company of their [181]

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[96] Bradley, *op. cit.*, p. 283.

[97] Thwaites, *op. cit.*, p. 87.

[98] Thompson, *op. cit.*, p. 327.

> 619 allies further than is necessary for their own safety in guarding against their com-
> 186 mon enemies."[99]

[181) This description reflects the esteem which the traders had for the Piegan
619 and is indicative of the manner in which the tribes reacted to the whites.
648 It is worthy of note that the Piegan is the tribe most often mentioned in
439 the journals, again indicating their more intimate relations with the traders.
184 The Blood and Siksika are often described as being insolent, independent,
[181) inclined to mischief and murder and difficult to trade with.[100]

The Canadian trading companies tried to separate the Piegan from the Blood and Siksika by sending them to trade at a different post, fearing that the latter would have an adverse influence upon the Piegan. The American Fur Traders met with the same situation, suffering from the attacks and depredations of the Siksika and Blood while trading peaceably with the Piegan. The traders, therefore, treated the Piegan preferentially, thus encouraging jealousy and discord among the three tribes. This developed to the point of open hostilities on a few occasions, on both sides of the international boundary. Such an incident occurred in the United States in 1830. Mitchell, in charge of Fort McKenzie, attempted to set an example for the Blood and Siksika by presenting a new uniform and double-barreled gun to a Piegan chief, who had been faithful to the whites, that is, never traded with the Canadians. The Blood Indians present were offended and spoke loudly of their intentions of killing the Piegan. A few days later the Blood shot a relative of this Piegan chief. The Piegan chiefs immediately used this as an excuse to attack and beat the Bloods. A Piegan sought to win the support of the whites,

> "Kutenapi . . . stepped forward and made a violent speech, in which he described in violent colors the offenses of the Blood Indians against the whites, and exhorted us to take vengeance for them."[101]

The greater accord of the Piegan with the traders was due to the fact that the Piegan took to large scale trapping while the other two tribes did not. This enabled the Piegan to establish themselves as an important source of beaver for the Americans. The American trader McKenzie, stated,

> "The Piegan band of the Blackfoot is warmly attached to our interests. They are the beaver hunters of their nation. The other bands (tribes) traded robes and provisions principally."[102]

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[99] Henry and Thompson, *op. cit.*, p. 722.

[100] Henry and Thompson, *op. cit.*, p. 530; Chittenden, *op. cit.*, Vol. 2, p. 853.

[101] Thwaites, *op. cit.* In 1810, Henry reported that the Piegan frequently offered to quell the disturbances of the Blood and Siksika. See Henry and Thompson, *op. cit.*, p. 530.

[102] Chittendon, *op. cit.*, Vol. 2, p. 851.

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the small raiding party to the point where it became the most characteristic type of Blackfoot warfare.

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This change in emphasis occurred gradually. The Blackfoot utilized the large scale pattern of tribal warfare during the fifty year period of territorial expansion, beginning in the 1730's, whereby they moved across the western Plains driving the Shoshone, Kutenai, and Flathead before them. In addition to the horse and gun, we must now attribute a good part of this successful conquest to the military strength made possible by their well developed political system. The systematic sending out of the small raiding party became important only after they had established their domination of the western Plains, when continued raids for horses superseded disputes over territory.

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Large war parties persisted even after the pattern of the raiding party was well established. This occurred mainly when the tribal interests were threatened, such as the attempts of the allied Plateau groups to hunt buffalo on the Plains. In 1787 Thompson wrote, "a party of about 250 warriors under the command of Kutenai Appe went off to war against the Snake Indians".[163] In 1800 the same chief, "was utterly adverse to small parties, except for horse stealing..... He seldom took the field with less than 200 warriors, but frequently with many more."[164]

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In these accounts we find elements similar to those described in Saukamappee's account. In a battle between the Piegan and Kutenai in 1810, in which both sides were armed with the gun, the Kutenai formed a rude rampart with their tents, tent poles, and baggage. The Piegan attacked with their cavalry but were three times repulsed. They then resorted to their older practice of infantry fighting. About 170 men drew up a rude line about 400 yards from the enemy, and at intervals sent forty men forward to dare them to battle. They would approach to about 60-80 yards, shouting insults, calling them old women, and dancing and springing in a frantic manner so as to make more difficult targets.[165] These elements are clearly a survival of an old pattern.

Later Warfare

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Changes occurred in the use of weapons following the introduction of the gun. The lance, once so important, was discarded as a useful weapon and became a ceremonial object. The quilted leather shirts that were worn for protection against arrows were of little use against bullets and gradually disappeared. The shield, while losing most of its utilitarian value became

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[163] *Op. cit.*, p. 347.

[164] *Ibid.*, p. 370.

[165] *Ibid.*, pp. 424-425.

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APPENDIX

PRE-RESERVE BLACKFOOT RELATIONS WITH THE AMERICAN AND CANADIAN GOVERNMENTS*

United States

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The United States government first concerned itself about its western Indians in order to advance American trading interests on the Upper Missouri. When in 1824, Indian agents were appointed for the Indian tribes of the Upper Missouri, they were for the first time within reach of Blackfoot country. It was not until 1834 that an official agent of the government met with the Blackfoot.[1] Indian agents at this time were working in the interest, if not in the employ, of the American Fur Company. Until the 1850's, meetings of Indian agents with the Blackfoot were sporadic. The agents limited their activities to the trading posts where they occasionally distributed goods to the Blackfoot in the name of the Great Father at Washington.[2] There was thus from the beginning an association of the fur companies and the government in the minds of the Indians.

The movement of settlers to the west, which had begun in the thirties reached great proportions by 1850. The increase in the number of immigrants led to plans for the construction of a trans-continental railroad. Before this could be undertaken the inter-tribal warfare between the Blackfoot, Crow, Gros Ventre, Flathead, Nez Perce and Kutenai, had to be stopped. Gov. Isaac Stevens, who headed the railroad survey, therefore began a series of peace councils with the Indians of the northern Plains which led to the signing of the treaty of 1855 with the Blackfoot, otherwise known as the Judith Treaty.[3]

In this treaty Blackfoot territory from the valleys of the Three Forks of the Missouri River, east to the upper waters of the Yellowstone, an area of 30,000 square miles, was set aside as a common hunting ground for the Blackfoot and Gros Ventre. The country north of this common hunting

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* Since the differential treatment of the Blackfoot by the American and Canadian fur companies was paralleled by their treatment at the hands of the American and Canadian governments, we will trace the relations of the Blackfoot with both governments up to the reserve period.

[1] Chardon's Journal, *op. cit.*, p. 254.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. xxxviii.

[3] A. W. Hoopes, *Indian Affairs and their Administration*, p. 101.

ground as far as the Canadian boundary and east and south as far as the 175
Musselshell River, and north of the Missouri to its junction with the Milk 648
River was defined as the territory of the Blackfoot nation. The United 657
States government was to guard the Indians against whiskey traders, attacks by white men, and any abrogation of their treaty rights. The United States further agreed to spend $20,000 a year for ten years in goods and provisions for the Piegan, Blood and Gros Ventre, and $15,000 each year for ten years to establish and instruct them in agriculture and mechanical pursuits, education and Christianization.[4] This treaty was ratified in 1856.

The Annual Reports of the Indian Bureau indicate that the annuities were peaceably distributed in the years following, but much of the goods received had no relation to the needs of the Indians. One agent wrote,

> "I would respectfully recommend that the following be dispensed with altogether . . . calico, ½ of the coffee, fish hooks and lines, combs, thread, . . . and that there be substituted . . . shirts, bed-ticking, flour, powder ball . . ."[5]

These requests were sent in year after year but for the most part went unheeded. There were some feeble attempts to introduce farming and cattle grazing, to which the Indians were definitely not receptive. From 1855 to 1860 there was little change in the conduct of the Indians. The older men tried to abide by the treaty stipulations but the warriors continued on the war path.[6]

Until 1860 the penetration of Blackfoot country by white settlers had 175
been gradual. Routes to the Pacific lay south of the Blackfoot and did not 648
directly affect them. However, the cattle ranching which had been going on near Fort Bridger since the 1840's now began to push north into Blackfoot country. The discovery of gold in 1862 at Grasshopper Creek, within the common hunting grounds of the Blackfoot and Gros Ventre brought still another invasion. Immigrants now came by the thousands and towns sprang up almost overnight. By May 26, 1864, the territory of Montana was created.[7]

There now began a period of bitter conflict between the Blackfoot and the settlers. The low type of American frontiersmen were largely responsible. Of these, General Sully, Superintendent of Indians in the Territory of Montana said, "There is a white element in this country which from its rowdy and lawless character cannot be excelled in any section."[8]

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[4] *Ibid.*, p. 115.

[5] *United States Indian Affairs Office, Annual Report*, 1857/58, p. 82.

[6] Ibid., 1858/59, p. 116.

[7] Briggs, Frontiers of the Northwest, pp. 161–162, 185–186.

[8] Letter from the Secretary of War, *41st Congress, 2nd Session, H. Ex. Doc. No. 269, p. 3.*

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The liquor trade was still rampant, in open violation of the Indian Intercourse Act of 1832 and the Judith Treaty of 1855. Liquor was taking a great toll of Indian lives. The agent at Fort Benton was helpless, but when he objected he was reminded by the citizens "that as they were the advance guard of civilization in the far northwest, barbarians must succumb to their opinions."[9] Given the popular prejudice against the Indians, it was impossible to get a conviction against the whiskey traders in the local courts. "Rather than have a white man punished for assaulting an Indian, the justice of the peace and the sheriff resigned their offices."[10] Violation of government treaties with the Indians concerned them little. "The people claim superior rights to the Indians—and they are indiscriminately killing an Indian when seen,"[11] wrote an agent.

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Agent after agent sent annual reports to Washington pleading for a reservation to be set up for the Blackfoot, to avoid the clashes between Indians and settlers. One agent wrote,

> "If my services are for good, they are being poorly used while I remain at this place (Benton). It has become a city, duly incorporated as such by the territorial legislature, and has its municipal officers who are unfriendly to the Indians and whose sympathies are with the whites in their attacks upon them. If, as I earnestly hope, a reservation will be established for the Blood, Blackfoot and Piegan tribes . . . there may be much good effected throughout this territory. The agent would then be his own master in controlling his agency, without being dictated to as he now is by old trading posts, merchants, thieves, and blackguards."[12]

These pleadings went unheeded until 1874 when a reservation was finally set aside for the Blackfoot.

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In the meantime the friction between settlers and the Blackfoot increased. In 1865 a treaty was negotiated with the "Blackfoot Nation" in the person of a single Blackfoot chief! The object was to legally open to settlement territory that had already been occupied by the whites. The Blackfoot were to cede all their land lying south of the Missouri.[13]

This treaty was not recognized by the Blackfoot, nor was it ratified by Congress. Immediately after its conclusion the Bloods, Blackfoot and Piegan started to war against the Gros Ventre and the whites.[14] In April, 1866, a party of North Piegan burned the buildings of the government farm on Sun River and continued with an attack on a flourishing cattle ranch nearby.[15] It is significant that the Piegan, until now the most friendly to the whites, took an active part in these raids. It was their tribal lands that were being invaded by the white settlers (the Blood and Blackfoot ranged north of the line) and they were thoroughly aroused to the danger.

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[9] George B. Wright, *Annual Report*, 1867/68, p. 256.

[10] *Annual Report*, Sept. 2, 1868, p. 222.

[11] *Annual Report*, July 1, 1867, p. 206.

[12] *Ibid.*, pp. 207–208.

[13] *Annual Report*, p. 13.

[14] *Ibid.*, 1865/66, p. 202.

[15] *Ibid.*, p. 203.

The white inhabitants of Montana viewed the situation with alarm. It was reported that the Blackfoot were planning a war of extermination. "The militia were called out, intense excitement prevailed, but history fails to disclose that these wars ever materialized."[16] What is more, from the Indian agents' reports at this time, we learn that the settlers were on the aggressive. W. J. Cullen, Special Commissioner, who was sent to the Blackfoot, worked to put down the abuses against the Blackfoot. He wrote: "I am risking my life among a set of desperadoes, who live by their wits off the Indians."[17] He tried to prevent a frontier war ". . . which the majority of the settlers appear to be in favor of."[18] Cullen succeeded in concluding a treaty with the Gros Ventre and Blackfoot in 1868. By this treaty all land south of the Missouri was to be ceded to the government in return for which a payment was to be made. The Blackfoot were restricted to the land north of the river up to the Canadian line. The treaty was not to be binding to either party until ratified by the United States government. The failure of the government to ratify it created much discontent among the Piegan. Horse-stealing and petty thieving began again and culminated in the so-called Piegan war of 1869–70.

In the summer of 1869, a few wagons of emigrants were attacked near Fort Benton by Indians, later learned to be the Crow. Just after this, the brother of Mountain Chief, the head of the Piegan, and a young Blood boy, rode into Fort Benton with special orders from Major Alex. Culbertson. They were shot down by the excited settlers. The Piegans were now thoroughly aroused. Major Clark, a former agent of the American Fur Company who had married the daughter of a Piegan chief, was at this time living among the Piegan. A cousin of Clark's wife took advantage of this feeling against the whites to avenge a personal grudge and killed Clark. Four troops of cavalry and 55 mounted infantry under Brevet Col. Eugene M. Baker, started for the Piegan on Jan. 19, 1870. They came upon a Piegan camp whose lodges were filled with sick women and children. Chief Heavy Runner, a friendly Indian, came toward them unarmed and was shot down. The camp was exterminated; 173 women and children were slaughtered and many more wounded. In the investigation which followed, Baker was exonerated and the killing justified.[19]

This massacre, followed by an outbreak of small-pox, effectively and

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[16] John Carter, *The Blackfoot Claim*, Ms., p. 12.

[17] *Annual Report*, Sept. 2, 1868, p. 222.

[18] *Idem.*

[19] Raymer, *History of Montana*, p. 287.

175 completely cowed the Piegan. If any resistance on their part had been
648 contemplated, it never materialized. As Curtis wrote:

> "A study of the Piegan conflict with the white people, either citizens or soldiers, shows that, considering their number and their provocation, they were one of the most harmless tribes."[30]

Canada

It was not until after 1870 that the Blackfoot felt the force of white expansion in Canada. Blackfoot country had remained free from settlers. The North Saskatchewan, the main highway of traffic to the northwest, was north of Blackfoot country. So long as the Hudson's Bay Company retained its trade monopoly, the Blackfoot were free to continue their old life. But the days of the company were limited. In response to an increasing pressure for a national policy to deal with the growing westward expansion and immigration, Alberta and Saskatchewan were ceded to the Canadian government by the Hudson's Bay Company in 1870.

With the passing of political authority of the Hudson's Bay Company, there came an end to the harmonious relations with the Blackfoot in
175 Canada. A period of free trade now set in.

> 648 "New and reprehensible practises in trade were introduced. Competition was keen.
> 439 Trader outbid trader and upset the century old values fixed by the Hudson Bay Com-
> 273 pany. Alcoholic spirits, long discontinued by the company . . . for many years now
> poured in from Red River and from across the border. In southern Alberta, American whiskey runners from Montana introduced the lawless spirit of the American frontier. Contemptuous of Canadian authority, they built forts in Canadian territory, and debauched the Indians with alcohol."[31]

In 1872, Colonel Ross was sent west by the Canadian government to investigate. In his report he recommended that police be sent to put down the liquor trade:

> "The demoralization of the Indians and injury resulting to the country from this illicit traffic are very great. It is stated upon good authority that during last year
> [579] (1871) eighty-eight (88) of the Blackfoot Indians were murdered in drunken brawls
> amongst themselves, produced by the whiskey and other spirits supplied to them by the traders. At Fort Edmonton during the present summer whiskey was openly sold to the Blackfoot . . . by some smugglers from the U.S. . . . ".[32]

[797] In the same year, John McDougall, a missionary, visited the Blood, promising that the whites would soon bring law and order. He later arranged to meet Crowfoot, head chief of the Siksika, and told him that the

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[30] E. S. Curtis, *The North American Indian*, Vol. 6, p. 7.

[31] Stanley, *op. cit.*, p. 199.

[32] Stanley, *op. cit.*, p. 199.

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mounted police were coming to suppress the liquor trade, horse stealing, and inter-tribal warfare.[33] When the Mounted Police arrived they were welcomed by the Blackfoot. The literature contains many speeches of welcome of which the following are typical.

> "The Great Mother sent Stamixoton (Col. MacLeod) and the Police to put an end to the traffic in fire water. I can sleep now safely. Before the arrival of the Police, when I laid my head down at night, every sound frightened me; my sleep was broken; now I can sleep sound and am not afraid."[34]
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> "If the Police had not come to this country where would we be all now? Bad men and whiskey were killing us so fast that very few, indeed, of us would have been left today. The Police have protected us as the feathers of the bird protect it from the frosts of winter."[35]

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In 1877, a treaty was signed with the Blackfoot tribes, including the Sarsi, in which provisions were made for them to confine themselves to one large reserve. However, the government thereafter decided upon separate reserves for each tribe. The treaty provided a payment of $12 and an annuity of $5 for each man, woman and child; $25 for each chief and $15 for each minor chief. An annual allowance was provided for schools, ammunition, cattle and agricultural implements.

Comparison and Summary

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The tempo of western development in Montana was more rapid and sudden than in Alberta and accordingly, was more devastating in its effects upon the Blackfoot, particularly the Piegan. Long before the disappearance of the buffalo they were hemmed in by cattle ranchers, homesteaders and miners and were ruthlessly pushed off their land. In the ensuing conflict 648 between the Indians and settlers the government with its militia was on the side of the whites. The "bluecoats" became a symbol of a partial government and were heartily feared and hated by the Indians. Treaty after treaty was made with the Indians to legalise the inroads of the settlers, pushing the Indians within more and more confining limits. The Indians were bewildered by the rapid succession of treaties which were often not ratified in Washington and remained mere scraps of paper.

In Canada the Blackfoot fared much better. The later settlement of Alberta, the absence of a lawless frontier class, the prompt and efficient action of the few mounted police in suppressing the liquor trade that cropped up after 1870, and the establishment of reserves for the Indians before the influx of white settlers, spared the Blackfoot the bitter experiences of their American brethren.

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[33] John MacLean, *McDougall of Alberta*, p. 88.

[34] Stanley, *op. cit.*, p. 203.

[35] A. W. Haydon, *Riders of the Plains*, p. 16.

648 [177] Considering the strength of the Blackfoot tribes and the number of their grievances in nearly two hundred years of white contact, the absence of any organized resistance or war against the whites is truly remarkable. The literature is replete with statements about threatened uprisings which never occurred. Throughout, conflict with the whites was limited to actions of individuals or a few bands.

On at least three occasions the Blackfoot refused to join anti-white movements. The first was when Sitting Bull fled to Canada after the Custer [175] battle and appealed to the Blackfoot (1877) to join the Sioux in their war against the whites.[36] Later, in 1885, the Blackfoot refused to associate themselves with the rebellion led by Riel, the Cree half-breed.[37] The third [668] was the failure of the Blackfoot to participate in the Ghost Dance movement of the nineties, with its revolutionary anti-white ideology, which was [171] eagerly taken up by neighboring tribes.[38]

This non-participation in anti-white movements is to be understood in the light of a number of considerations. The slower and later influx of white settlers in Canada provided a refuge for the Siksika, Blood, and a portion of the Piegan, for a long time, and gave them a sense of security, though ultimately a false one. Had the Blackfoot tribes been pushed to the wall in the States, without the presence of this Canadian safety valve, they might have offered more stubborn resistance. As it was, it seemed pointless for them to fight American troops when they could still retire to their own land north of the line.

619 648 The absence of any well-developed political organization prevented the three tribes from presenting a solid front against the whites and made it impossible for them to utilize the strength inherent in their numbers. The so-called Blackfoot confederacy was a concept used by the traders which had little basis in fact. Despite the bonds of a common language, common customs and traditions and inter-marriage, they rarely acted in unison. They had no common council and no central leaders. Furthermore, within each tribe the bands were highly unstable units. The frequency with which individuals changed band allegiances, was not conducive to successful resistance against the whites, either moral or military.

The days of tribal warfare in defense of hunting grounds were long past. Warfare had become a matter of individual aggrandizement and there appeared to be no motives which would unite the tribes or the bands. In addition to these factors in their social organization and warfare, there was the further disruption of their intertribal unity by the fur trade, as was pointed out in the preceding section. 619 648

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[36] Cecil, Denny, *The Law Marches West*, p. 104.

[37] Stanley, *op. cit.*, p. 361.

[38] The Ghost Dance was taken up by the Assiniboine, Gros Ventre, Northern Cheyenne, Arikara, Gros Ventre (Minataree), Shoshone and Northern Arapaho, see James Mooney, *The Ghost Dance Religion and the Sioux Outbreak of 1890*, pp. 816-817.

Of no less importance, was the conciliatory role played by the chiefs and headmen, who very often did not consider it to their personal interests to resist the influence of the whites. The early missionaries first commented upon this when they recorded the support they received from the chiefs in their efforts to suppress intertribal warfare and horse stealing. Father Point stated: "Among the Blackfoot, the rich people who undertake to rebuke the wicked who possess nothing, have naught to gain and all to lose."[29] Indeed, peace would insure the security of those who had large herds. 622 177 648 (797)

Opposition, both to the cessation of the raiding parties and to the signing of treaties with the whites, came from the younger men. However, they were for the most part, successfully restrained by the chiefs. While it is true that Little Dog, head chief of the Piegan, was killed by his own warriors for his council of peace and friendship with the whites in 1860, Crowfoot, who had much more influence, was successful in keeping down hostile movements against the whites. Crowfoot, who was largely responsible for the maintenance of peace, was motivated by personal, and to some extent tribal, interests. He prophesied the extinction of the buffalo and the ensuing dependence of the Indians upon the whites, and looked upon resistance as foolhardy and hopeless. In 1876, he told Denny, a member of the mounted police,— 622 648

> "We all see that the day is coming when the buffalo will all be killed, and we shall have nothing more to live on and then you will come into our camp and see the poor Blackfoot starving. I know the heart of the white soldier will be sorry for us, and that they will tell the Great Mother who will not let her children die."[30]

In 1877, he won out against those who counseled against the signing of the treaty. In 1882–83, he allayed the resentment of his people incurred by the putting through of the Canadian Pacific railroad. Without the consent of the other chiefs, Crowfoot secretly capitulated to the railroad for a personal annuity of $700.[31] He was able to mollify the embittered chiefs by judiciously distributing horses. Again, in 1885, Crowfoot used his influence to keep the Blackfoot out of the Riel rebellion, but he played upon the fear of the whites to get a promise of larger rations in the future.

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[29] DeSmet, *op. cit.*, p. 950.

[30] Stanley, *op. cit.*, p. 221.

[31] *Richardson, Mss.*

A chief of the Followers-of-the-Buffalo Band gave Big Snake a fast buffalo horse 578
and in return Big Snake presented him with a fine weasel tail suit. The Buffalo chief 157
soon regretted his generosity and wished to recover his gift. Accompanied by his 682
father, he entered Big Snake's tipi and demanded his horse. Big Snake shot and
killed him. The father ran from the tipi. "No one tried to avenge his death because [431]
Big Snake was much stronger."

Many Pinto Horses, his brother, Packs His Tail, and Buffalo Chief were all hand- 578
some and wealthy. Buffalo Chief and Many Pinto Horses were drinking and quarrel-
ing. Each told of the grudge he bore the other. "Afterwards Buffalo Chief didn't 273
feel good and moved off."

Some members in the Many-Children Band were envious of Packs His Tail be-
cause he was rich. One day, he visited their camp, and after considerable drinking [682]
on both sides, they took away his gun and killed him. When his brother, Many Pinto
Horses, came to avenge his death the Many-Children shot him, too.

The following are tales of feuding within the family of the wealthy and 578
famous Blood chief, Red Crow, who signed the treaty in 1877 which estab- 621
lished his tribe on its reserve: [648]

When Red Crow was appointed head chief in 1877, his older brother, Sheep Old Man was greatly angered. He left his band and joined the Followers-of-the-Buffalo where he also had friends and relatives.

Sheep Old Man, his sister, Revenge Walker, and her husband, Running Bird, were [685]
camping with their followers at Calgary. Red Crow came in with some of his sup-
porters. Two relatives, Many Dust, a band chief of the Hairy-Shirts, and Owns Center
Painted Tipi, accused him of keeping property that rightfully belonged to his sister,
Revenge Walker. The unwelcome visitors were ejected from his tipi, and Revenge
Walker, unable to persuade her husband to accompany her—in fact he forthwith
left her—went alone to her brother's tipi to demand her property. When Red Crow
saw her approaching, he ran off. Revenge Walker consoled herself by killing some of
his horses. Sheep Old Man then said, "Now we will have trouble. We had better
move our tipis away from our relatives."

At another time, Sheep Old Man, while drunk, shot his younger brother, Not Real [273]
Good, in the shoulder. Their sister, Revenge Walker, was so angered that she wanted
to kill Sheep Old Man. As dawn came, Not Real Good, said, "Older sister, you have [539]
had trouble with our brother, Red Crow. Now you are having trouble with Sheep
Old Man, our brother, also. Only you and I are together. We have other brothers
but they may not like us because we have been having trouble with Red Crow and
Sheep Old Man. They may stick to them. Running Bird, your husband, has left
because of your quarrels. Marry the white trader. He may have good medicine and [582]
then I may get well. His sister answered, "I do not want to see you die. I will do
as you advise, although I do not like to marry a white man. But then I might get
even with Red Crow when he comes to trade." So she married Davis, the trader.

When Red Crow heard that his sister had married, he brought some fine tanned dresses, shirts and twenty horses to her as a gift. He greeted his sister and asked her forgiveness. Revenge Walker said, "I was going to kill you, but I think so much of

> 578 our younger brother, Not Real Good, that I will do as he asks. But don't let things
> 621 like this happen again. If they should, although I am a woman, I will do as I wish.

A last story is taken from Biele's notes:

> [579] One night two brothers, relatives of Red Crow, visited him in his tipi. The chief was smoking and after his guests were seated, one on either side of him, he offered his pipe, the customary gesture of hospitality. The first brother refused to smoke. Signifying his anger, he pointed the stem at Red Crow. The other brother then rose, took aim and fired at the chief. The bullet missed him but hit his wife, Water Bird, in the shoulder. Red Crow then shot and killed his assailant while the second brother, though wounded, escaped into the darkness.

181 "Everyone," comments Henry, "that has lived a wicked life on earth,
578 committed murder in his own nation, or been guilty of suicide, must pass by
a different route to the Elysian fields."[70] But neither certainty of an uneasy
626 immortality, nor cooperative mechanisms, nor informal pressures succeeded
157 in outlawing intratribal killing among the competitive and violent Blood in
the Buffalo days.[71] Nor did sixty years' confinement on a reservation, nor
the threat of the white man's law fundamentally alter the personality structure developed in that early period.

III. Blood Economy and Social Change in the Reserve Period*

● 648 Two vital factors acted upon Blood society simultaneously. In 1877,
136 Treaty No. 7 was signed with the Blackfoot tribes in Canada restricting
them to a reserve, and in 1878, the winter count of a Blood reads, "This was
the year the buffalo went out of sight."[72]

657 Both the Blood and the Canadian Government were fortunate in the

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178 [70] Henry and Thompson, *op. cit.*, p. 529.

[71] Ruth Benedict in discussing Jules Henry's paper, *Some Cultural Determinants of Hostility in Pilaga Indian Children*, p. 120) writes: "The indication of cross-cultural studies is that minimal interpersonal hostility also is correlated with certain cultural institutions, political and economic, as well as forms of the family and methods of child rearing." Comparatively, for external threat as a cooperative mechanism, see Esther S. Goldfrank, *Historic Change and Social Character, a Study of Teton Dakota*, p. 78 ff., for informal pressures, see Karl L. Llewellyn and E. Adamson Hoebel, *The Cheyenne Way*, Chapter 9.

127 * The years given in the footnotes in this section refer to the *Annual Reports on Indian Affairs* contained in the *Sessional Papers of the Dominion of Canada*. From 1873–1880, these are listed under the Department of the Interior; later reports were issued by the Department of Indian Affairs. From 1930 on, they appear separately.

128 All names used in this monograph, except those from published sources are fictitious.

[72] Percy Creighton's winter count.

101 characteristics shared by all tribal members is recorded. In later
128 chapters intratribal differences will be discussed.

The Regional Habitat

Boundaries

131 The Blackfeet Indian Reservation, approximately 2,400 square miles in area, is located along the eastern slopes of the Rocky Mountains in northwestern Montana. It is bounded on the north by the United States-Canadian international boundary, on the west by the foothills of the Rockies, on the south by Birch Creek, and on the east by a line commencing at the junction of Cut Bank Creek and the Marias River extended northward, following the center of Cut Bank Creek for twenty miles and then directly, to the Canadian border.[33]

Topography

133 The land encompassed by these boundaries consists mainly of high, rolling praries which are interrupted by numerous rivers and creeks and occasional ponds, lakes, buttes, and hills. A narrow strip, three to ten miles wide, along the western border includes a few barren peaks of the Rocky Mountains and the forested hills and valleys of the foothill region. The mountains reach heights of eight to ten thousand

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[648] [425] [33] The northern boundary was established by the Treaty of 1855 (U.S., Statutes at Large, 1859, XI, p. 657), the western by the sale of the mountain portion east of the Continental Divide by an agreement ratified by Congress in 1896 (ibid., 1897, XXIX, p. 353). The southern boundary was established by an act of Congress in 1874 (ibid., 1875, XVIII, p. 28), and the present eastern border was set by an agreement of sale between the Blackfeet and the United States, ratified by Congress in 1888 (ibid., 1889, XXV, p. 113).

[Period Prior to 1350]

174 into the plains from the northeastern woodlands in precontact times. Early migration problems are still unsolved, but Ewers, relying on information given Thompson by elderly Piegan, places the Blackfeet "on the Saskatchewan Plains, near the Eagle Hills, some 400 miles east of the Rockies, in the early 18th century." Since then the migration of the Blackfeet, with the Piegan in the van of the movement, has been to the southwest, reaching to the Rocky Mountains and the Missouri River by the beginning of reservation days.[54]

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175 As noted before, the first contact between the Blackfeet and white men occurred in mid-eighteenth century. Earlier diffusion of elements of European culture, and later increasing contact between whites and Indians due to the expanding fur trade and continental exploration, had marked effects upon Blackfeet culture. Because Ewers and Lewis both have contributed scholarly studies of the cultural changes of this period,[55] and these changes were antecedent to the culture to be described, they need no elaboration here. The general trend, however, was one of the progressive adaptation to increasing white influence--of cultural elaboration.

● [641] The classic Blackfeet culture was nearing its zenith in 1855 when Isaac Stevens concluded a treaty among the Blackfeet, Gros Ventre, Nez Perce, Flathead, Pend d'Oreille and the United States.[56] Within a decade of the signing of the treaty, ever increasing American migration

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[54] Ewers, 1955, op. cit., p. 300.

[55] Ewers, 1955, op. cit.; Lewis, op. cit.

[56] Charles J. Kappler, ed., Indian Affairs, Laws and Treaties, U.S. Senate, 57th Cong., 1st Sess., 1903, Senate Doc. 452, Vol. II, pp. 552-555.

CHAPTER V

BLACKFEET DEPENDENCY AND READAPTATION: 1884-1960

Introduction

731 The unsuccessful hunts of 1883-1884 marked the end of the
175 subsistence pattern on which the Blackfeet had built their culture.
[182] The Indians scoured the region for food, and moved in around the
[651] Agency to ask for help from the Agent. In Blackfeet culture, those
who had food shared it during times of want; the Agent supposedly had
food and as a leader he was now expected to validate his status by
● [648] caring for those who had none. The United States government had
acknowledged responsibility for the Blackfeet in the 1855 and subsequent
treaties, but Agency supplies were inadequate to meet famine conditions.
Up to one-fourth of the Piegan perished during the winter of 1883-1884.[92]

178 The Indians had to find a new and meaningful subsistence base,
182 new ways in which to express old values and to maintain prestige and
177 status. At the same time, the government, upon which they were
dependent, pressed them to accept new value and prestige systems.

128 Because of this conflict, the historical review of Blackfeet acculturation since 1884 includes (1) a statement of the general goals and attendant values expressed in United States Indian policies of the period, and (2) a presentation of the means used to further these aims

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[92] Ewers, 1958, *op. cit.*, pp. 293-294.

[1884-1960]

121 2. Progress could only be made slowly through humanitarian
177 programs that would allow for gradual, individual readaptation and assimilation.

177 The goals, and the two approaches to their implementation are
●648 expressed well in the following statements selected from Senate debates
[425] over the question of allotting land to individual Indians.

The goal was restated eloquently by Senator George H. Pendleton of Ohio in 1881:

> we must encourage them to industry and self-dependence . . . and we must stimulate within them . . . the idea of home, of family, and of property. These are the very anchorages of civilization; . . .[94]

The short-term approach was advocated by Senator Henry M. Teller of Colorado in 1886:

> I suggested on a former bill the opening of the country, putting side by side with the Indian farmer of a white farmer; . . . Give to our people, . . . the right to go upon the Indian lands and make, side by side of the Indian farm, a farm tilled by the aggressive and enterprising Anglo-Saxon, and in a little while contact alone will compel these people to accept the civilization that surrounds them on every side.[95]

Senator John T. Morgan of Alabama advanced the humanitarian viewpoint:

> The measure which the Senator proposes here must be one of growth. Of course we know that all this western country at some future day must be populated jointly by Indians and white people; but until the Indians get into condition where they can be protected against the white men who would sell them whiskey, . . . powder and shot, and out-deal them

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[94] U.S., Congressional Record, 46th Cong., 3d Sess., 1881, XI, p. 906.

[95] Ibid., 1886, XVII, pp. 1762-1763.

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> in all their transactions, it is the duty of the Government of the United States to preserve them in some form or other until they have matured sufficiently to become able to control their own domestic affairs; I mean their household affairs, and manage their own property.[96]

These two themes will be seen to alternate in ascendancy in governmental policies from that time to the present. The goal of eventual assimilation has been questioned seriously only in the last twenty-five years. [425] The debate culminated in the passage of the General Allotment Act of 1887 that authorized the President to permit the allotment in severalty of reservation lands to Indians.[97]

The values stressed in that policy are: work (industry), self-dependence (self-support), individualism (independence of the tribe) and acquisitiveness (implied in home-building, material thrift and private ownership). These are some of the values held by the culture-bearing agents of American society who came into long and continuous contact with the members of the Blackfeet tribe. The Americans apparently gave little thought to either the preservation of the Indian value and status systems or to ways in which these might be used to implement governmental policies.

121 The following review of the history of United States-Blackfeet relations from 1884 to 1960 attempts to trace the interplay between the American and Blackfeet value systems during the course of economic readaptation.

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[96] _Ibid._, p. 1764.

[97] U.S., _Statutes at Large_, 1887, XXIV, p. 388.

648 In 1887 the agreement whereby the Blackfeet relinquished claim
175 to the lands to the east of the present reservation boundary was
425 ratified by Congress. In return the United States promised annuities,
[434] in the amount of $150,000 for a period of ten years, to be paid in the
form of goods and services necessary for Indian progress toward
civilization.[102]

175 The first ration of cattle and horses under the agreement was
177 issued in 1890. Agent John Catlin summed up the preceding five years
657 of agricultural endeavor as "commendable," but wrote that the Indians
233 241 had experienced failure "through no fault of their own." The Indian
interest in stock raising led to his recommendation that grazing be
given precedence over agriculture in future programs.[103] Efforts to
establish farming as an economic base had met with little success.

1892-1905

657 By 1892 the Piegan herd had been built up to 6,827 head of
175 cattle and 4,616 head of horses. The Indians were moving out over more
[233] of the reservation and claiming land in anticipation of eventual
[361] allotment. They were beginning to establish herds, build houses and
[246] corrals, and to shift the emphasis of cultivation to raising of hay for
[241] the stock.[104] Each subsequent report emphasized the suitability of the
area for stock raising and reported a substantial increase in the
Indian herds.

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[102] Ibid., 1888, p. 303. [103] Ibid., 1890, p. 114.

[104] Ibid., 1892, pp. 807, 280-281.

175 In 1898 a severe winter and a shortage of feed caused a
657 40 per cent loss among the Indian cattle, and the Irrigation Engineer
233 for the Agency recommended extension of the irrigation canals in order
[242] to increase hay production.[105] Indian ranchers, however, had a chance
to recover from this setback. Additional cattle were included in the
annual issues and stock raising continued.

648 An agreement for the sale of the Rocky Mountain portion of the
175 reservation was approved by the United States government in 1896.[106]
425 The conditions of the sale assured another ten years of annuities after
the obligations under the 1887 treaty had been met.

657 By 1904 the Agent reported a total of 20,509 head of cattle and
433 12,000 head of horses owned by the Blackfeet, and claimed that only
[233] 10 per cent of Indian subsistence had been dependent upon government
issues for that fiscal year.[107] Thus in the first two decades of
dependency the Blackfeet had tried farming and experienced failure.
They were then encouraged to try stock raising and began to make some
economic adaptation as herdsmen.

177 Their cultural readaptation, up to this time, had been less
[555] successful than the economic development. The increasing settlement of
the lands around the reservation and the efforts of the police had
ended horse raiding, thus eliminating an important avenue to prestige.
[797] Christian missions, particularly from the Roman Catholic church, had

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[105] Ibid., 1898, p. 187-188.

[106] U.S., Statutes at Large, 1897, XXIX, p. 353.

[107] Reports of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, op. cit., 1904, pp. 610-611, 600.

653 In 1933 the Works Progress Administration (W.P.A.) and the
657 Civilian Conservation Corps (C.C.C.) programs were established to
meet national unemployment and the benefits were extended to Indian
[464] reservations.[133] Like the irrigation construction of earlier years,
these programs provided a source of seasonal cash labor, an important
prop to the economy, but one that provided little training for permanent
employment on the reservation.

648 At this point in Blackfeet adaptation, new national Indian policies were being formulated. The Meriam Report, a monumental study of the Indian problems published in 1928, questioned the whole doctrine of assimilation of the Indians.

> He who wishes to merge into the social and economic life of the prevailing civilization of this country should be given all practicable aid and advice in making the necessary adjustments. He who wants to remain an Indian and live according to his old culture should be aided in doing so.[134]

648 This, and many other of the recommendations, became official
657 policy with the passage of the Indian Reorganization Act in 1934.[135]
[425] The act provided, among other things, for the cessation of allotment
[426] of Indian land, a limitation on the sale of restricted Indian land to
others than tribal members, and the establishment of a revolving loan
fund from which Indian corporations could borrow to further either
tribal or individual enterprises. Tribes were authorized to organize

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[133] U.S., Department of the Interior, Annual Report of the Secretary of the Interior, 1937, p. 218.

[134] Lewis Meriam et al., The Problem of Indian Administration, Institute for Government Research (Baltimore: The John Hopkins Press, 1928), p. 28.

[135] U.S., Statutes at Large, 1934, XLVIII, p. 984.

648 657 and to adopt a constitution, and those who organized were given broad powers of self-government.[136] Organized tribes were also empowered to incorporate and manage tribal properties and income. Actions of both the political and business organizations were subject to approval and review by the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

[177] In addition, the traditional cultures were given recognition for the first time. A circular sent to all Agencies in 1934 illustrates the sharp reversal from previous communications about Indian cultural practices:

> No interference with Indian religious life or expression will hereafter be tolerated . . . . And it is desirable that Indians be bilingual . . . . The Indian arts are to be prized, nourished, and honored.[137]

The Indians were to have a choice as to course of their development.

The Period of Self-Government, 1935-1960

642 473 162 161 433 233 [426] The Blackfeet Constitution and the Blackfeet Corporate Charter were accepted and approved in 1935. The population continued to grow: the report for 1935 lists the membership of the Blackfeet Tribe as 3,962 of which 561 were living outside the reservation jurisdiction.[138] The economy improved slowly after the bad years of the early thirties. The stockmen, in particular, were aided by a provision for a repayment cattle pool authorized in 1934.[139] A man could build a herd by borrowing cattle from the pool and repay in kind from the increase.

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[136] *Annual Report of the Secretary of the Interior*, *op. cit.*, 1941, p. 419.

[137] *Ibid.*, 1934, p. 90. [138] *Ibid.*, 1935, p. 163.

[139] See *Ibid.*, 1937, pp. 212-213 for repayment in kind program, and *Ibid.*, 1944, p. 241 for a review of the program.

648 The Johnson-O'Malley Act[140] passed in 1934 and amended in
657 1936[141] authorized the Secretary of the Interior to contract with a
state or other political units, and with schools, colleges, and private
corporations for educational and medical services, agricultural
[871] assistance, social welfare and relief for Indians. The Annual Report
for 1934 stated that the Browning schools were assuming the task of
educating the Blackfeet children from that district.[142]

177 The majority of the Blackfeet still were attempting to make
readaptation to the immediate present, to find success in a new
economic endeavor. They were pressed to close a wide cultural gap in
a short period of time, and to make things more difficult, the national
433 economy would not stand still. Ranching and farming were changing in
178 both production and marketing practices. One summary statement in
1957 recognized the course of this change.

> The trend toward larger farm and ranch units in Montana has existed since 1920. Original acreages under the homestead laws proved too small for profitable farming and gradually the more successful operators acquired additional land. The advent of power machinery about 1925 greatly accelerated this trend.[143]

The Indian's future on small subsistence farms of 80 acres, or
on a ranch using a 360 to 420 acre grazing allotment, was not promising.
[427] A successful operation required the use of leased land and adequate
[426] capital. The heirship status of individual trust lands made leasing

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[140] U.S., Statutes at Large, 1934, XLVIII, p. 596.

[141] Ibid., 1936, XLIX, p. 1498.

[142] Annual Report of the Secretary of the Interior, op. cit., 1934, p. 85.

[143] The Montana Almanac, op. cit., p. 202.

433 to have had family support. Only by cooperation, in which some of the
592 family took wage earning jobs while others tended the ranch, were most
enterprises kept going.

648 The pressure for ending trust status of Indian land culminated
657 in the adoption of a Congressional Resolution in 1953 calling for the
423 "earliest possible" termination of Federal responsibilities over
425 specified Indian tribes.[162] The Blackfeet were not included among the
Indians to be "freed," but the resolution was interpreted as a statement of intent to end rapidly the trust status of all Indians. In response to this resolution, the

> issuance of patents in fee nearly doubled as compared with the previous year . . . while the disposition of allotted holdings through advertised sales more than tripled. . . .[163]

A brief moratorium in 1958 was lifted the following year "in compliance with a congressional request. . . ."[164] The Blackfeet continued to lose reservation land to non-members.

433 While Federal and tribal authorities were attempting to increase
the industrial capacity of the reservation, other forces were working
[161] against them. The population was growing--from the 3,921 resident
[162] members in 1941 to 4,850 in 1960. The increasing number of Blackfeet
[167] who had left the reservation often included the most highly educated.
[425] The land sales and continued fractionization of allotments through
inheritance procedures made land consolidation and utilization
[434] increasingly difficult. The trend toward larger farms and ranches

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[162] U.S., Congressional Record, 83rd. Cong., 1st Session, 1953, XCIX, Part 8, p. 9968.

[163] Annual Report of the Secretary of the Interior, op. cit., 1953, p. 24.

[164] Ibid., 1959, p. 253.

177 communities--Warm Springs, Yakima, Umatilla, Crow, Gros Ventre,
184 Cheyenne, Assiniboine, Mandan, Flathead and Cree, among others.
541 Sleeping and cooking tents are erected behind the tepee circle and
[574] upwards of seven hundred people will be living on the grounds during
the encampment. Each family camping on the grounds is paid a cash
allowance toward their maintenance and shares in a daily meat or food
ration.

The formal program opens with a parade through the main street
of Browning and out to the encampment grounds near the Museum of the
[535] Plains Indian, one-half mile west of town. A regular program of Indian
[533] dancing to the accompaniment of singing and drumming by local and
visiting singing groups is scheduled each afternoon, and occasionally
continues during the evening if the weather permits.

The dancing sessions are interrupted frequently by both planned
and unplanned intermission activities--special dance contests, games,
[431] and "give-aways." Some of the last mentioned gift giving ceremonies
are sponsored by the Indian Days Committee to honor and give gifts
[553] to invited guests from other tribes. Others are put on by individuals
[556] and families who wish, and are expected, to give gifts in remembrance
[554] of a deceased relative, to give a new and significant Indian name to a
child in a public naming ceremony, or to honor some other person by a
[533] display of generosity in his name. At the 1959 celebration two Chiefs
had the singers sing their respective power songs and then gave gifts
to friends and visitors.

[648] Another almost regularly occurring part of the program is a
ceremony in which distinguished visitors are adopted into the Blackfeet

177 184 tribe. These people are given an Indian name and a war bonnet, or other token of their new status, by an honored elder.

541 [648] [574] The encampment also provides the opportunity for other forms of social expression. People visit from tepee to tepee, drink coffee, eat and talk. By mid-afternoon a stick game or two gets under way near one of the concession booths behind the tent circle and usually continues until dawn. Other periods of time are spent doing the chores of camp living and in the pastimes appropriate to sex and age--the children play games, older people work on costumes, play blackjack, visit, loaf, or go into town.

In spite of this being a community enterprise, and the fairly large crowds that are attracted to it, the people in relatively continuous attendance are the Indian-oriented. The people who camp on the grounds and participate in the festivities are those identified as Indian-oriented. The onlookers can be sorted quickly into four categories: (a) Indian-oriented spectators from many parts of the reservation who spend much time on the grounds and can be seen in attendance day after day, (b) a number of people recognized as of white-orientation who make a brief appearance, spend an hour or two watching the proceedings and then leave, (c) a few white-oriented people, who because of special community roles and interests have reason to be in attendance more frequently, and (d) a changing tourist attendance of twenty-five to one hundred persons who spend varying amounts of time enjoying the spectacle.

Sun Dance

177 184 796 The last Sun Dance (1959) was held in conjunction with that year's Indian Days. The religious ceremonies were held on the

15: Ewers E,G-4,5 (1941-1949) 1950 NF6 Blackfoot NF6
Gros Ventre NQ13

B G 131 Tribes Occupying This Area: Within the period of recorded history of this area at least sixteen different Indian tribes have occupied it or portions of it for longer or shorter periods. They are:

The tribes of the so-called Blackfoot Nation.

B G 101 648 The term "The Blackfoot Nation" was employed at the time of the first treaty negotiated between the four tribes of the Blackfoot, Blood, Piegan and Gros Ventre with the United States at the mouth of the Judith River in 1855. It was an expedient designation to cover these four tribes which, at that time, were allies. Actually it was B G [619] a misnomer. They were not a nation in the sense of their recognizing any common, central governmental authority. Even their alliance did not last for more than six years after their leaders signed that treaty.

B G 197 [619] While the Blackfoot, Blood and Piegan were recognized as separate tribes by Mathew Cocking as early as 1772, they speak a common language and believe themselves to have had a common origin. They have no such feeling about the Gros Ventre. Although the Gros Ventre also speak a dialect of the Algonkian language family, it is most B G [191] closely related to Arapaho speech. The Gros Ventre and Blackfoot languages are so different that members of one tribe cannot understand speakers of the other unless they have made a special effort to learn G 101 [197] [174] their dialect. On the other hand, the close similarity between the Gros Ventre and Arapaho dialects, coupled with surviving traditions in both tribes of their separation has led ethnologists to conclude

[P.28]

15: Ewers E,G-4,5 (1941-1949) 1950 NF6 Blackfoot NF6
Gros Ventre NQ13

B But
G rivers were important natural resources. From them the Indians
133 obtained water for themselves and their dogs and horses. Their
231 tree-bordered banks furnished timber for firewood and for fashion-
823 ing weapons and household utensils and cottonwood bark for winter
[137] [924] horse feed. The river valleys also offered shelter for their winter
camps and winter pasture for their horses. The number of rivers and
streams in the Missouri-Saskatchewan Region was sufficiently great
and their distribution was such that nomadic bands of Indians could
travel widely throughout the area with rarely any need for a dry camp.

B Rivers were extremely important as points of reference to
G early white observers in locating the Indian tribes of the region.
648 They also were commonly designated as boundary markers in the treaties
of the United States with these tribes and in the Executive Orders
defining tribal reservations. Especially useful in defining the
locations of tribes and negotiating tribal boundaries in the United
States was the Missouri River and its larger tributaries - the Milk,
Marias (and its western branches Birch Creek and Cut Bank Creek),
Teton and Sun rivers on the north, and the Musselshell on the south.
B Equally important to these Indian tribes were the North and South
G Saskatchewan and the latters' affluents the Red Deer, Bow, Oldman and
133 Belly rivers.

B After the buffalo were exterminated and their nomadic days
G were ended these Indians settled down along river valleys and tried
361 to farm until they began to receive cattle following the 1888
178 Agreements.

[p.32]

Flannery (1953, pp. 31-34) indicates clearly that the same 171
political organization prevailed among the Gros Ventre.

It is important to keep this rather democratic system of 648
government in mind in considering the official relations of these 571
tribes with the United States government. No one man could make an
important decision regarding war or peace or tribal boundaries on his
own for the entire tribe. Tribal decisions were made by the head chief [622]
in consultation with the chiefs of all the bands. Band decisions were [619]
made after consultation with the other head men in the group by their
principal chief.

If we keep these facts in mind, some of the statements made 648
by Indians at councils with representatives of the United States make far more sense than if we do not understand this basic principle of political organization in these tribes. There is evidence that the United States became increasingly cognizant of Blackfeet political democracy when in the land agreements of the 1880s and 1900s it was required that they be signed not alone by the chiefs but by the majority of the adult males of the tribe. This was not the case in the ratified treaty negotiated in 1855 or in the unratified treaties of 1865 and 1868, when chiefs and head men only signed the official documents.

It may be seriously doubted whether, in terms of the Indians' own political system, the North Blackfeet were ever a party to either a treaty or agreement with the United States. Only four, a minority of their chiefs, signed the 1855 treaty, only one signed the 1865 and 1868 treaties, none signed the land agreements of the 1880s and 1890s.

B By the same token neither the North Piegan nor Blood tribes were
648 parties to these late nineteenth century agreements. Some individual members of those tribes may have been on the Blackfeet Reservation in Montana at the time these agreements were made and may have signed them. But it is certain that neither the chiefs nor the majority of the adult male members of the Blackfeet tribes then residing on reservations in Canada (ie. the North Blackfeet, Blood, and North Piegan) signed these agreements.

B The limited authority of the chiefs restricted their ability
648 to make promises in their treaty negotiations which would be binding
622 upon all the members of their tribes or bands. Thus, in the treaty
G
[648] negotiated in 1855, the Blackfeet tribes and Gros Ventre agreed to intertribal peace with neighboring tribes. Yet in the treaty proceedings Onis-tay-say-nah-que-in, head chief of the Blood tribe, expressed his fear that the chiefs could not prevent their young men
B from going to war. Actually the provisions of Articles 2 and 6 of
[721] this treaty were broken within two weeks of its signing when Blood war parties departed on expeditions against the Crow. (Annual Report Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1856, p. 75).

B The Factor of Seasonal Movements: Although the Blackfeet
G tribes and the Gros Ventre as well as neighboring tribes dwelling on
221 the plains the year round have been properly considered nomads, we should recognize that their yearly round in buffalo days comprised

this area until the year 1887 (when intertribal horse raiding ended) the region was a theatre of intertribal warfare. The Blackfeet tribes when allied with the Gros Ventre were regarded by early writers as the most warlike (the word "bloodthirsty" was repeatedly used) Indians in the region, feared by neighboring tribes and white traders alike. Documentation will be provided to show that the Blackfeet tribes acquired probably all and certainly nearly all of their lands within present Montana occupied at the time of the 1855 treaty by conquest from other tribes within the preceding period of 75 years.

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For the Blackfeet tribes as a whole war with neighboring tribes was the rule, peace the exception. However, before the 1855 treaty, one large Piegan band, the Small Robes, were friendly with the Flathead, and this had an important bearing upon the joint occupancy of that area south of the Musselshell defined as a common hunting ground in that treaty.

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As a general rule tribal boundaries were considered unimportant between tribes which were at peace. Not only were they unimportant but they were practically non-existent in the minds of the Indians. Tribes at peace with one another intermingled within the same gross area. At various periods bands of two or more of the Blackfeet tribes established their winter camps in the same river valley. At the time of the 1855 treaty the Gros Ventre and the Blackfeet tribes were allies and neither the Indians nor the Commissioners deemed it

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B necessary to define a boundary between the Blackfeet tribes and the
G Gros Ventre, whereas it was important to distinguish the boundaries
131 between these tribes and the enemies of some or all of them - the
648 Assiniboin, Crow, and the tribes from west of the Rockies whose hunt-
721 ing grounds were restricted to the common hunting ground south of
the Musselshell.

B In the second half of the 19th century, however, conditions
G changed. In 1861 the Blackfeet and their old allies the Gros Ventre
648 became enemies. The Gros Ventre had already made their peace with
the Assiniboin (still enemies of the Blackfeet tribes) and shared
their hunting grounds with the Upper Assiniboin. Shortly thereafter
they made peace with the River Crow (still enemies of the Blackfeet
tribes) and shared their lands with them also, as well as with migrant
Arapaho and Cheyenne hunting bands.

B In the history of Indian occupancy of this region prior to
G the disappearance of the buffalo (after which hunting grounds were
648 of no significance as such) friendly tribes tended to share hunting
grounds in common; while hostile tribes tended to winter some distance
back from the frontier area.

B It is important also to distinguish between a tribe's
G theatre of warfare and its area of occupancy. Throughout the period
721 of intertribal warfare prior to 1887, Blackfeet and Gros Ventre war
131 parties traveled great distances to make war upon their enemies both

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000 as they probably had never known before and certainly have not
experienced since.

B The fact that the fur trade first reached these Indians
G by way of the Saskatchewan River and that their trading posts prior
439 to 1832, were all in the British Possessions, and primarily on the
131 North Saskatchewan tended to hold the Blackfeet and Gros Ventre in
the north during the years prior to that date. Whereas, the establishment
of posts on the Missouri in 1832 and thereafter encouraged them
to move southward where they could find a ready market for buffalo
robes as well as peltries.

B The invasion of the Blackfeet and Gros Ventre country by
G settlers didn't occur until the Montana gold rush of 1862. Then,
721 until 1870, the international line served as a convenient escape
hatch for Blackfeet war parties who attacked white settlers and
B freighters in the United States and fled north across the line. It
G is significant, also, that prior to 1883 white pressure for the cession
648 of the Indians' land in Northern Montana east of the Rockies involved
131 primarily Blackfeet lands between the Musselshell and Birch Creek,
lands not occupied by the Gros Ventre.

B Finally the location of the Indian Agencies established by
G the Government for the Blackfeet and the Gros Ventre came to have an
131 increasingly important influence upon the locations of the Indians
657 as they became more dependent upon the issuance of weekly rations
when the buffalo became scarce, then disappeared altogether.

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B than two decades after the smallpox epidemic of 1781 they drove not
G only the Shoshoni, but also the Kutenai, Flathead and Pend d'Oreille
721 from the plains to seek safety beyong the Rockies. (See sections of
175 this report dealing with these tribes ante 1810).

B Alexander Mackenzie described the location of the Blackfeet
G tribes, the Gros Ventre, and their allies, the small Sarsi tribe, on
131 the Saskatchewan in 1801. However, this description, written by a
175 high official of the Northwest Company, probably refers to their
[648] locations in 1789 or 1790.

"At the Southern headwaters of the North Branch dwells a tribe called Sarsees, consisting of about thirty-five tents, or one hundred and twenty men. Opposite to those Eastward, on the headwaters of the South Branch, are the Picaneaux (Piegan), to the number of from twelve to fifteen hundred men. Next to them, on the same water, are the Blood Indians, to the number of about fifty tents, or two hundred and fifty men. From them downwards extend the Black-Feet Indians, of the same nation as the two last tribes; their number may be eight hundred men. Next to them, and who extend to the confluence of the South and North Branch, are the Fall, or Big-bellied Indians, (Gros Ventre), who may amount to about six hundred warriors." (Mackenzie, 1801, p. lxx).

G In the next decade the Gros Ventre, easternmost of these
131 tribes were dislodged from their position between the forks of the
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B G 171 He placed their northern boundary at the Sweetgrass Hills at the 49th parallel stating, "It is not known how long the Shoshoni had been in possession of their country between the Missouri and the Sweet Grass Hills before the advent of the horse, but they are thought to have been there a long time." (Teit, 1930, p. 321). The map prepared by Franz Boas on the basis of Teit's field data which was published in the 41st Annual Report of the Bureau of American Ethnology, entitled "Distribution of Salish Dialects, and of Languages Spoken in the Adjoining Territory, before 1800", places the Shoshoni on the plains east of the Rockies in the Missouri River valley extending northward to Milk River, which forms the boundary between the Shoshoni and the Blackfoot and Gros Ventres to the north.

It is noteworthy also that Peter Pond's map of 1785 (previously referred to) places the Snake Indians on the plains east of the Rockies and northeast of the southern headwaters of the Missouri River. (Innis, 1930, Map).

B G 173 131 171 648 175 The evidence of Shoshoni occupancy of a large portion of the area defined as the territory of The Blackfoot Nation in the treaty of 1855, prior to 1800 is based on both contemporary and persistent traditional data. This evidence appears to me to be both abundant and conclusive.

B G 171 C. The Flathead East of Rockies ante 1810: The pattern of Flathead occupancy of the plains eastward of the Rockies prior to 1810 appears to have been similar to that of the Shoshoni.

B G 171 Teit's traditional evidence from elderly Flathead informants was to the effect that aboriginally (ante 1800) the Flathead lived entirely east of the Continental Divide, near the mountains in winter and ranging eastward in summer. Their territory included "practically all of present counties of Deerlodge, Silver Bow, Beaverhead, Madison, Gallatin, Jefferson and Broadwater, and parts of Park, Meagher, and Lewis and Clark". (Teit, 1930, pp. 303-304). The map in B.A.E. 41st Annual Report, based on Teit's data shows the Flathead and Plains Salish occupying the plains and southern headwaters of the Missouri east of the Rockies.

B 171 Wissler found definite and consistent traditions among the Piegan to the effect that "before the white man dominated their country" the Flathead occupied the Sun River country. (Wissler, 1910, p. 17).

B G 171 [648] D. The Pend d'Oreille East of the Rockies before 1810: At the treaty negotiations of 1855 with The Blackfoot Nation, Alexander, Head Chief of the Upper Pend d'Oreille, vigorously championed the right of his people to hunt on the plains north of the common-hunting ground, within the area described by the Commissioners as reserved for the Blackfeet. He based his argument upon the traditional use of this northern area by his people, saying, "A long time ago our people, our ancestors belonged in this country. The country around the Three Buttes. We had many people on this side of the mountains...A long time ago our people used to hunt about the Three Buttes and the Blackfeet lived far north. When my Father was living he told me that was an old road for our people." (Partoll, 1937, p. 7). The proceedings of the council do not indicate that any of the chiefs of The Blackfoot Nation questioned Alexander's statement.

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In 1811, David Thompson obtained information from an aged Kalispell (Pend d'Oreille) Indian telling of his people's flight to the mountains to escape the aggressive Piegan, and of his happiness that the acquisition of firearms by the Pend d'Oreille (since 1809) had made it possible for his people to "have regained much of our country, hunt the Bisons for food and clothing, and have good leather tents." (Thompson, 1916, p. 463).

In that same year Alexander Henry stated that the Kullyspell (Pend d'Oreille) were abundantly provided with horses and "frequently accompany the Saleeish to the plains to procure buffalo meat. (Henry and Thompson, 1897, Vol. II, p. 711).

E. The Kutenai on the Montana and Alberta Plains ante 1810:

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David Thompson also mentioned the Kutenai as one of the tribes driven across the mountains by the aggressive Blackfeet in the latter part of the eighteenth century. They were formerly in full possession of the plains north of the Salish peoples. (Thompson, 1916, pp. 327-328). In 1811, Alexander Henry noted that empty Kutenai lodges were still standing near Rocky Mountain House, mute reminders of that tribe's former occupancy of the area. (Henry and Thompson, 1897, II, 707).

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B the northwestern boundary of the Louisiana Purchase and hence the
G northwestern limit of the United States at that time.

175 On the Teton River they saw signs of freshly killed buffalo, but no Indians. They continued northward to Cut Bank Creek, northern tributary of the Marias. There Lewis tried to take observations, but with little success due to cloudy and rainy weather. By July 25, he was convinced that the sources of the Marias were to the westward rather than farther north. Fearing further delay would unnecessarily slow the eastward progress of his party, he turned south. Besides, two of his men returned with the disturbing news that they had seen a great number of Indian camp sites near the forks of the Marias which appeared to have been occupied scarcely six weeks before. Lewis frankly recorded in his journal: "We consider ourselves extremely fortunate not having met with these people." (Lewis and Clark, Thwaites Ed., Vol. V, p. 216).

B But their luck was too good to last. Next day while about
G four miles east of the forks of Two Medicine River and Badger Creek,
175 on the present Blackfeet Reservation, they met a party of eight
● 648 Indians, and Lewis felt obliged to spend the night with them. That evening, through signs, Lewis and the Indians exchanged diplomatic misinformation. Lewis told the Indians he had come in search of them to get them to make peace with their neighbors and to engage in trade with the Americans (which he had not) and the Indians readily assented

to Lewis' apparent insistence that they were Gros Ventre (which they were not). They claimed there were three chiefs among them (which was very unlikely) and that they desired to make peace with the Flathead (also improbable). Early next morning the Indians tried to steal the soldiers' guns, provoking a skirmish in which one of the Indians was killed and another wounded. After the Indians rode away, leaving their dead comrade on the field, Lewis' little party beat a hasty retreat southward, fearing their late adversaries might soon return with reinforcements. Next day they met the rest of their little party at the mouth of the Marias, took to their boats and paddled downstream toward civilization. They were lucky to meet no more Indians on their way down the Missouri to the mouth of the Yellowstone. (Ibid. 218-228).

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Of the many noteworthy accomplishments of the Lewis and Clark expedition their identification of the Indian occupants of the area north of the Missouri was not one. There can be little doubt that the only Indians they met in this region, the eight with whom they fought on the upper Marias, were Piegan not Gros Ventre. Not only did David Thompson, their Canadian contemporary learn as much (Thompson, 1916, p. 375), but Alexander Culbertson, who knew the Piegan well as an American trader after 1833, was told of the killing of one of their number by Clark's party by the Piegan.

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III. Period of American Fur Trade on the Missouri. (1806-1850).

B David Thompson, on the Saskatchewan, profited by Lewis'
175 skirmish with the Piegan. He wrote, "The murder of two Peeagan
131 Indians by Captain Lewis of the U.S. drew the Peeagans to the Missouri
721 to avenge their deaths; and thus gave me an opportunity to cross the
mountains by the defiles of the Saskatchewan River which led to the
headwaters of the Columbia River." (Thompson, 1916, p. 375).

B In the next few years, while Thompson was arming the tribes
G west of the Rockies and enabling them to reassert more strongly their
721 right to hunt buffalo on the plains east of the Rockies, the vengeful
175 [439] Piegan and their allies were making life miserable for the American
[411] trappers who began to try to exploit the rich beaver country around
the headwaters of the Missouri.

B For a quarter of a century after Lewis' little scrap with
G the Piegan, "Blackfeet" war parties hounded the American trappers
721 who approached the country around the Three Forks via the Yellowstone
●648 River and the country of friendly Crow Indians, enemies of the
175 Blackfeet and Gros Ventre. Twice, in 1811 and again in 1821, the
"Blackfeet" drove the trappers out of this country. The details of
these conflicts are not important to the problem of Indian land
occupancy in this region. (They can be found in Hiram M. Chittenden's
The American Fur Trade of the Far West, Two Vols. New York, 1935).

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More important is the fact that the American trappers of the period prior to 1831, knew the Blackfeet and Gros Ventre only as enemies. They never became well enough acquainted with them to be able to identify them by tribe. To them all these Indian raiders, whether Piegan, Blood or Gros Ventre were simply "Blackfeet". So there is doubt as to which tribes were actually involved in most of these fights with the trappers. In the winter of 1810-11 Alexander Henry, at Rocky Mountain House on the Saskatchewan learned of both Blood and Gros Ventre attacks on the Americans in preceding months because they brought their booty to Rocky Mountain House. (Henry and Thompson, Vol. II, pp. 735-736).

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The Americans of the period were trappers who exploited the fur resources of the Indian lands. They were not Indian traders. Throughout this period the Blackfeet tribes and the Gros Ventre continued to trade with the whites on the Saskatchewan. And it is possible that those traders, who supplied the hostile Indians with their guns and ammunition, may have encouraged the attacks on the Americans to avail themselves of the booty in valuable beaver pelts the Indians brought north after successful depredations upon the Americans.

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How little the American trappers really knew of the Blackfeet is illustrated by Jedediah Morse's report on the fur trade to the Secretary of War in 1822. "Blackfoot Indians - These with

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B the Crows aforementioned, and other roving tribes not already named,
G of whom we know but very little, who inhabit in the Indian manner,
175 the head waters of the Missouri, within the extensive limits of the
131 Missouri Territory, have been conjecturally estimated, exclusively
of the Crows, at 20,000 souls. This probably is too low an estimate.
The names of some of these tribes are scarcely known; still less
their numbers." (Morse, 1822, p. 252).

B Three years later (1825) General Atkinson ascended the
G Missouri to make treaties of peace with the Indians, but he did not
175 get as far as the warlike Blackfeet. Of them he wrote, "The Blackfeet
131 Indians, who, as before mentioned, we did not see, inhabit, it is
●648 believed, all the district of country from the Falls of the Missouri
back into the Rocky Mountains, and around Northwardly to the head of
Maria's River. They carry their war excursions to the South as far
as the Big Horn. The intermediate country between the upper part of
the Yellow Stone and the three forks of the Missouri is considered
as neutral ground, both the Crows and themselves being afraid to visit
it, only with war parties, owing to the deadly hostility existing
between them. The Blackfeet hunting ground is, therefore, confined
to the country embracing the three forks of the Missouri, West into
the Mountains, and below, Northeastwardly, to the head of Maria's
River, and more Northwards on the head waters of the Katchewina
(Saskatchewan), beyond our boundaries. It is understood of latter
years, they rarely come below the Falls of the Missouri." (Atkinson, 1826,
p. 11).

131 have chosen to hunt around the region of the Three Forks and
175 southward in this dangerous, debatable land, prior to 1830.
Why should they have subjected their women and children to threats of enemy attacks in this "common fighting ground" when there was no necessity whatever for their doing so?

439 This situation changed markedly with the inauguration of
648 peaceful American trade with the Blackfeet on the Missouri in 1831.
175 The Blackfeet were not opposed to trading with the whites in the United States. What they had opposed vigorously for a quarter of a century was the action of white trappers in exploiting the fur resources of the Indian country, an activity from which the Indians derived no profit.

It was in the fall or early winter of 1830 that Kenneth Mc Kenzie, in charge of the American Fur Company post of Fort Union at the mouth of the Yellowstone, made a daring and successful bid for the Blackfeet trade. He sent Jacob Berger, who had worked for the Hudson's Bay Company and knew both the Blackfeet language and many of their prominent men, westward to open peaceful relations with these Indians. On Badger Creek, on the present Blackfeet Reservation, within a very few miles of the spot where Captain Lewis fought the Piegan in 1806, Berger's little party met some Piegan who took them to their winter camp (on Sun River or Belly River - it is not clear which), where they passed the rest of the winter. In spring Berger led a large Piegan party to Fort Union to trade. And Kenneth Mc Kenzie promised them he would establish a trading post in their country. (Bradley, 1900, pp. 202-203; Stuart, 1876, pp. 84-85). 439 648 175

The following fall Kenneth Mc Kenzie sent James Kipp to establish the first American trading post in the Blackfeet country, Fort Piegan at the mouth of the Marias River. In his first year at this post Kipp won the trade of both Piegan and Blood Indians by his liberal gifts of liquor and his acceptance of buffalo robes in trade. Buffalo robes were a common commodity among the Blackfeet but the traders in the British Possessions could not afford to accept them. They were too heavy and bulky in proportion to their value. The American traders had the advantage of a ready road to market via the Missouri River down which they could transport thousands of buffalo robes by flatboat. The Hudson's Bay men were limited to lighter loads of the more valuable furs which could be portaged from river to river en route to market.

After Kipp and his men returned down river with their profitable trade in the spring of 1832, the Indians (Blood or Assiniboin) burned Fort Piegan. But David Mitchell built a larger post six miles above the mouth of the Marias on the Missouri that fall, and continued to woo the Blackfeet trade away from the Hudson's Bay Company.

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B Undoubtedly, the establishment of a trading post on the
175 Missouri must have had the effect of encouraging the Piegan,
439 probably the Blood, and possibly the North Blackfeet to move southward
131 especially during the winter and spring trading season when robes and
B [648] peltries were prime. This also enabled the American traders to get
to know the Blackfeet tribes, their numbers, locations and customs.

B In the summer of 1833 the noted German scientist-explorer,
G Maximilian Prince of Wied, visited the posts of the American Fur
175 Company as high up the Missouri as Fort Mc Kenzie in the Blackfeet
country. Maximilian's journal contains information on the locations
of the Indian tribes in present Montana, which he obtained from the
fur traders.

B He described the territory of the Assiniboin in 1833, as
G follows:

171 "They live in 3,000 tents; the territory which they claim as theirs, is between the Missouri and the Saskatchewan, bounded by lake Winipick on the north, extending, on the east, to Assiniboin River, and on the west, to Milk River." (Maximilian, Vol. XXII, p. 387).

On his trip up the Missouri, upon reaching the mouth of Milk River July 19, 1833, he noted, "This river comes down in many windings, and constitutes the western frontier of the territory of the Assiniboins." (Ibid, Vol. XXIII, p. 46).

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439 While at Fort Mc Kenzie (August 9 - September 14, 1833)
175 Maximilian noted that all three of the Blackfeet tribes had come
648 in to trade, and that a North Blackfeet chief had given Mitchell the scarlet uniform with blue facings and yellow lace which he had received from the British traders as a symbol of his preference for the Americans. (Ibid., Vol. XXXIII, p. 124).

131 Maximilian described the country of the Blackfeet thus:

175 "The Blackfeet move about in the prairies near the Rocky Mountains and partly live among these mountains, but especially they dwell between the three forks of the Missouri, of which Jefferson River is the most northerly; the Madison River, the western or central;
[439] and the Gallatin the most southerly or easterly. They live, however, especially the Piekanns, as far down as Maria River, in the prairies of which they move about, and where all the three tribes sometimes meet to trade with the American Fur Company. They likewise trade with the Hudson's Bay Company.." (Ibid., Vol. XXIII, p. 96).

Much more detailed, and probably more accurate as a description of the location of the Blackfeet tribes in the middle '30s is Alexander Culbertson's recollection, recorded by Lieut. James Bradley some forty years later:

"The Piegans usually summered about the Three Forks of the Missouri and occasionally wintered there, but their usual wintering place was Sun River. They ranged over the intervening country, Prickley

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131 the Small Robes or Little Robes.

175 Bradley (Vol. IX, p. 281) wrote of the Small Robes: "At
101 the time the whites first became acquainted with the Piegans (1831),
175 though avowedly a part of the Piegan tribe they lived wholly by them-
[177] selves, seldom meeting with the remainder of the tribe and showing so
marked a line of separation that by one or two writers they were
classed as a separate tribe." George Catlin, who depended upon the
fur traders for his information, listed the Small Robes as distinct
[162] from the Piegan. He estimated their numbers at 250 lodges, some 15%
of the total population of the Blackfeet tribes. (Catlin, 1841,
Vol. I, p. 52). Father De Smet, who became acquainted with the
Little Robes in 1840 or 1841, also considered them to be a distinct
tribe. (Chittenden and Richardson, 1905, Vol. III, p. 949).

175 There can be little doubt that this band lived farther
131 south near the Rockies than the other Piegan bands in the 1830s.
[164] In the summer of 1837 Jim Bridger visited the village of the then
chief of the band, Little Robe, on the headwaters of the Missouri
and learned that they were suffering from the smallpox. (Victor,
[165] 1877, p. 231). Probably the numbers of band members was greatly
reduced by this plague which wrecked havoc among all the Blackfeet
tribes.

175 The Small Robes made peace with the Flathead tribe which
648 crossed the Rockies to hunt buffalo around the headwaters of the

Missouri. When Father De Smet established a Catholic mission among 175
the Flathead in 1840, the Small Robes visited it and came under 648
his influence, offering their children for baptism. (Ewers, 1946, [797]
p. 398).

In the year 1845, the Small Robes suffered a severe defeat 175
at the hands of the Crows. De Smet at first believed all of their 648
men were killed in the action. But it developed that a small 721
remnant remained. A dozen lodges of them joined the Flathead in 727
their fall buffalo hunt in 1846, during which this allied force met and defeated the Crow. (Ibid., p. 398).

It is my belief that the strongest claim the Blackfeet had 131
to the area around the headwaters of the Missouri, rested upon 175
occupancy by the Small Robes band of the Piegan in the decades of
the 1830s and 1840s. But it is clear the Small Robes were not the [648]
sole occupants; that they shared the resources of the region in buffalo with their Flathead friends. This region thus became something of a common hunting ground before it was declared such by the terms of the 1855 treaty.

During the period between the smallpox epidemic of 1837 [164]
and the treaty of 1855 there also appeared to be a growing tendency for the Northern Blackfeet to remain north of the international boundary in the British Possessions. This appears to be indicated in the description of the territory of the three Blackfeet tribes

IV. Period of the First Treaty (1850-1862)

In the middle of the nineteenth century there were no white settlers in or travelers through the country of the Blackfoot tribes and the Gros Ventre. The only whites in this region were fur traders. These Indians, with the exception of a few who had traveled far beyond the area occupied by these tribes, had never seen a white woman. Certainly they had never seen one in their own country.

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The great overland emigrant road to Oregon, California and Utah, the Oregon Trail, was located far to the south of the country of these tribes. Its use was increasing annually in the late '40s, and the growing numbers of emigrants passing over this trail were killing buffalo and disturbing their movements, causing increasing alarm to the Indians.

In the fall of 1849, David D. Mitchell, Superintendent of Indian Affairs in St. Louis, recommended that the government should call a great council with all the plains tribes living between the Missouri River and Texas to make formal arrangements to indemnify the Indians for their losses and to define tribal boundaries. He pointed out, "The boundaries dividing the different tribes have never been settled or defined; this is the fruitful source of many of their bloody strifes; and can only be removed by mutual concessions, sanctioned by the Government of the United States." (D. D. Mitchell to Commissioner of Indian Affairs, Oct. 13, 1849. Indian Office Records, The National Archives).

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On May 26, 1851, the Commissioner of Indian Affairs authorized Mitchell to hold a council and to treat with the "Indian tribes of the Prairies". The names and numbers of tribes to be invited to this council, the choice of council site and details of the proceedings were left to Mitchell's discretion. (Commissioner Lea to D. D. Mitchell, May 26, 1851, Indian Office Letter Book, No. 44, The National Archives).

Alexander Culbertson of the American Fur Company, a former colleague of Mitchell's in the fur trade, was chosen to collect delegations from the Upper Missouri tribes and to conduct them to Fort Laramie, the location Mitchell had chosen for the council. According to Lieut. James Bradley, early Montana historian, word of the proposed council at Fort Laramie reached Culbertson too late to permit him to obtain delegations from the Blackfeet tribes and the Gros Ventre. (Bradley, Vol. III, p. 266). Bradley knew Culbertson well in later years, so it is probable he obtained this information from him.

But Culbertson did collect a small delegation from the Assiniboin and other tribes farther down the Missouri and accompany them to Fort Laramie. Although the Blackfeet and Gros Ventre were not a party to this treaty, a portion of their lands were defined in the treaty, because the Commissioners decided to include within the area described in the treaty all lands in present Montana south and east of the Missouri.

Of great assistance in explaining the tribal boundaries defined in this treaty and in obtaining the agreement of the several Indian delegations present to these boundaries was a map drawn by Father De Smet, who had traveled widely in the area, showing tribal boundaries. De Smet, himself wrote of this map some six years later (July 1, 1857):

"When I was at the council ground in 1851, on the Platte River, at the mouth of the Horse creek, I was requested by Colonel Mitchell to make a map of the whole Indian country, relating particularly to the upper Missouri, the waters of the Columbia and its tributaries west of these mountains. In compliance with this request I drew up the map from scraps then in my possession. The map, so prepared, was seemingly approved and made use of by the gentlemen assembled in council, and subsequently sent on to Washington together with the treaty then made with the Indians." (Chittenden and Richardson, 1905, Vol. 4, p. 1498).

When, on November 11, 1851, D. D. Mitchell, Senior Commissioner, transmitted the Treaty of Fort Laramie to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs he sent this map with it, explaining that the tribal boundaries were clearly marked and defined in the presence of the Indians and were fully approved by them. (Mitchell to Commissioner of Indian Affairs, Nov. 11, 1851, Indian Office Records, The National Archives).

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This original map is in the Map Division of the Library of Congress. It is noteworthy that this first official attempt to locate the tribes of the Missouri Valley above the mouth of the Yellowstone does not concern itself with the lands north or west of the Missouri's main stem. It is noteworthy also that neither the map nor the descriptions of boundaries in this region provides any marginal areas - there are no common hunting grounds, no debatable lands, no unoccupied areas along the frontiers between hostile tribes. To the extent that the map and descriptions of tribal lands arrived at in this treaty failed to portray these marginal areas, they failed to present true pictures of Indian occupancy at that time.

We are interested primarily in two areas portrayed in the map and described in the treaty:

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1. The Blackfoot Territory: This is described primarily in terms of river boundaries - it follows the Missouri river upward from the mouth of the "Muscle-Shell" to its source, thence south along the main range of the Rockies to the northern source of the Yellowstone, down that river to the mouth of Twenty five Yard Creek, - thence across to the headwaters of the "Muscle-shell" and down that river to its mouth. De Smet's map attempts to interpret that description on the basis of the geographical knowledge available to him.

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D. D. Mitchell, in describing the territory of the Blackfeet on Jan. 24, 1854, stated: "For a more definite description of their territory I refer you to a map accompanying the Fort Laramie Treaty. This partition of country, as there laid down, was agreed upon by the various tribes assembled on that occasion." (Mitchell in Schoolcraft, Vol. V, p. 686).

Actually this agreement on the part of the tribes participating in the treaty involved no boundary concessions by any of them save the Crow and Assiniboin. The Flathead and other tribes from west of the Rockies who hunted buffalo in the area identified as "Blackfoot" by the Fort Laramie Treaty, were not parties to that treaty and made no concessions.

Note also that the treaty made no attempt to define "Blackfoot" territory north or west of the Missouri. The area described as "Blackfoot" territory in the treaty is not the same as Royce Area No. 398, which extends beyond the Missouri main stem to the Rocky Mountains.

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2. The Assiniboin Territory: The territory of the Assiniboin described in the Fort Laramie Treaty refers only to that portion of the Assiniboin territory lying south of the Missouri. Its boundaries were described as the Missouri River from the mouth of the Yellowstone to the mouth of the "Muscle-shell", thence southeasterly to the headwaters of Big Dry Creek, thence down that creek to its entrance into the Yellowstone, nearly opposite the

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broken out between the Gros Ventres and Blackfeet". A Gros Ventre man had been killed by Blackfeet, and the murdered man's tribe was on the verge of sending a war party against their old allies to revenge their loss. (Stevens, 1860, Vol. XII, p. 92-93). It seems that following the Gros Ventre peace with the Assiniboin their alliance with the Blackfeet was weakened and friendship between these long-time allies became increasingly strained until they became avowed enemies in 1861.

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Gov. Stevens, desiring to hold a council with the Piegan, sent the artist of his expedition, John Mix Stanley accompanied by the Piegan chief, Little Dog, to bring Indian leaders in to Fort Benton. Stanley found the great camp of the Piegan, their tribal summer encampment, north of the international boundary, in the vicinity of the Cypress Hills. On the basis of information obtained on this trip he described the country of the Blackfeet tribes thus:

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"The Piegan and Blood bands hunt, trade, and winter on American soil while the Blackfeet extend their hunts as far north as the Saskatchewan river, and trade as frequently with the British as with the American posts." (Stanley, 1855, pp. 448-449).

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At the council at Fort Benton, September 21, 1853, Stevens exacted the promise of the Indians who were present not to make war upon the Flathead and Nez Perce, but the chiefs frankly told him "they could not speak for those of their tribes who were not present." (Annual Report Comm. Indian Affairs, 1854, pp. 202-203).

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(Annual Report Comm. Indian Affairs, 1854, pp. 202-203). 000

When Governor Stevens started westward from Fort Benton 175
to continue his explorations for a possible railroad route to the
Pacific, he left behind his intelligent, energetic assistant,
James Doty. Doty was not only to make meteorological observations
and examinations of the country which would be of value to the rail-
road survey, he was also to collect information about and take a [648] ●
census of the Blackfeet Indians, and to impress on the Indians the
benefits they would derive from a proposed peace council with the
western Indians.

In December 1853, Doty visited the winter camps of a 175
considerable number of the Blackfeet bands. He found "a large 131
number of the Piegans" encamped on the Marias near the point where
the trail from Fort Benton to the Three Buttes (Sweetgrass Hills)
crossed the Marias. Moving up river he found "nearly the whole of the
Blood, Blackfeet and North Piegan Bands" encamped near Arnell's Houses
on the Marias. He learned that "a portion of the Blood Indians were [439]
in camp five days march to the north and intending to go to the
British Posts to trade." (Doty to Stevens, Dec. 29, 1853, The National
Archives).

At that time it was no longer necessary for the Blackfeet 175
to bring their furs and buffalo robes in to Fort Benton during winter. 439
The traders built winter posts in the river valleys where the Indians 000

131 two subdivisions of the Piegan) as follows:

101 "1st The Blood Indians No. 270 Lodges 2430 Souls and
175 810 warriors. These Indians occupy the extreme northern portion
[162] of the Blackfeet country, bordering on the south branch of the
Saskatchewan and extending south to the headwaters of Marias and
Milk Rivers and East to the 106th degree of Longitude, they confine
themselves closely to these limits and are seldom found beyond them,
[439] at least on the south; Their great trade is in Buffalo Robes and is
[224] made at a winter Post of the Am. Fur Co. at the forks of the Marias
River, and in the summer a small party usually go to the Hudson
Bay Cos Post on the Saskatchewan to trade such small peltries - Ermine,
Martin, Beaver etc - as may have been collected by them.

[162] 2nd. The Blackfeet proper, No. 290 lodges 2610 Souls and
[619] 870 warriors. This band occupy the same country as the Blood
[648] Indians, and join them generally in hunting the Buffalo and occasionally
for mutual defense against their hereditary enemies the Crees and North
Assiniboins.

[162] 3rd. The North Piegan No. 90 Lodges 810 Souls and 270
[619] warriors. This is merely a subdivision of the great Piegan Band
[439] and differ only from the South Piegan in the fact that in the
Summer season they join the Bloods and Blackfeet and go to the North,
but it is invariably their custom to consort with the South Piegan

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000 with them they be regarded as such." (Ibid., p. 8).

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Doty found that "the Blackfeet do not consider the Gros
101 Ventres a portion of their nation. They do not hold Councils
B G together neither do they associate in hunting or war parties."
[648] (Ibid., p. 9).

B G 171
In the same year Edwin T. Denig supplied Gov. Stevens with a report on the Assiniboin. Denig distinguished between the Northern Assiniboin and the Southern Assiniboin.

"The Northern Assiniboin 250 or 300 lodges, rove the country from the west banks of the Saskatchewan, Assiniboin, and Red Rivers in a westward direction to the Woody Mountains north and west among small spurs of the Rocky Mountains east of the Missouri, and among chains of small lakes through this immense region. Occasionally
B [648] making peace with some of the northern bands of Blackfeet enables them to come a little farther west and deal with those Indians, but, these "Peaces" being of short duration, they are for the most part limited to the prairies east and north of the Blackfeet range. The rest of the Assiniboin, say 500 to 520 lodges (who may be called the Southern Assiniboin), occupy the following district, viz., commencing at the mouth of the White Earth River on the east, extending up that river to its head, thence northwest along the Couteau de Prairie, or Divide, as far as the Cyprus Mountains on the North Fork of the Milk River, thence down Milk River to its

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junction with the Missouri River, thence down the Missouri River B
to the mouth of White Earth River, or the starting point." (Denig, G
1930, p. 397). 171

Doty and Denig certainly agree on their definition of the G
Milk River as the boundary between the Assiniboin and Gros Ventre 175
in the year prior to the negotiation of the first treaty with The 131
Blackfoot Nation.

As the time for the council approached, the Commissioners B
(Gov. Stevens and A. Cumming) sent James Doty to "go north to confer G
with Tribes and Bands of the Blackfoot Nation and make the necessary 175
arrangements to secure their presence at the approaching council." 648
Doty's report of his mission to the North Camps Aug. 31 to September 15, 1815, throws considerable light upon the movements of the Blackfeet tribes in summer at that period as well as upon the proportions of the several tribes which actually participated in the treaty negotiations. (This report is part of the proceedings of the treaty council in The National Archives.)

To find the Blackfeet and arrange for them to come in B
to negotiate their first treaty with the United States, Doty had 175
to travel north, across the international boundary into Canada. At 648
that season the buffalo were north of the line, and the Indian hunting 131
bands had followed them north. Doty learned that all four Blackfeet groups and the Gros Ventre had been in the vicinity of

[p. 117]

175 the Cypress Mountains (Hills) in July. On going north he did not
648 see buffalo until he had crossed the line and reached Lake Pakowki
131 in present southern Alberta. He found the South Piegan (some 200
[162] lodges, virtually the entire group) encamped on Belly River. There
[162] were also about 80 lodges of North Piegan and Blackfeet. The majority of the Blood Indians, some 200 lodges, he was told agreed to meet Lame Bull, the head chief of the South Piegan at "Writing on Stone" on the north side of Milk River (in the British Possessions) to move south to the council together. Doty had to travel north as far as Bow River to find 50 lodges of Blackfeet, 70 of North Piegan and 90 of Blood Indians. Of these 210 lodges, only 110 agreed to come south to the council, the others preferring to stay in the north. He learned there were 170 more lodges of North Blackfeet on Elk (Red Deer) River still farther north. Doty reported (p. 8 of his report): "It appearing to me clearly that these are British Indians, who neither hunt nor trade on American soil, I did not, in view of my instructions, deem it my duty to endeavour to bring them to the Council, and therefore did not proceed to Elk river."

Doty also reported that the 70 lodges of North Piegan on Bow River were among the 100 in that vicinity that did not wish to come south to participate in the treaty with the United States.

175 Comparing the numbers of lodges of the several Blackfeet
648 groups in Doty's estimates of their total populations, with the

number of lodges he indicated came south to participate in the B
treaty negotiations we find: 175
648

Probably 200 lodges, or the entire population of the [162]
South Piegan participated.

B
More than 200 lodges, the great majority of the total of [162]
270 Blood lodges, participated.

At least 170 lodges, and probably considerably more of B
the North Blackfeet *did not participate*. This was a majority of [162]
the 290 lodges of the tribe.

Some 70 of the 90 North Piegan lodges, an overwhelming
majority of that group, *did not participate*. B

In the light of the Indian concept that chiefs could not [829]
make decisions for other portions of their tribe without consulta- [622]
tion, it is very doubtful whether either the North Blackfeet or [619]
the North Piegan people at that time considered that *as tribes* they
had concluded a treaty with the United States. Both were too poorly
represented at the treaty council.

No land was ceded in this first treaty of 1855. According B
to Commissioner of Indian Affairs, George W. Mannypenny's instructions G
to the treaty Commissioners, "The principal objects to be attained 175
by the proposed negotiations are, the establishment of well defined 648
and permanent relations of amity with all the most numerous and

[p. 119]

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Whites make these lines to show where each must hunt so that there shall be no quarrels." (Ibid., p. [illegible]).

It is also apparent that (2) neither the western tribes nor the Piegan considered that the North Blackfeet were sufficiently well represented at this council to be regarded as a party to the decisions made there. As Little Dog stated, "I do not know what they intend to do."

Another insight into the prevailing attitudes of the Indians toward the boundaries can be gained from the short speech of Big Canoe, a prominent Pend d'Oreille chief. ..."I thought our roads would be over all this country. Now you tell us different. Supposing that we do stick together, and do make a peace. That is the way we talk on the other side. Now you tell me not to step over that way. I had a mind to go there." (Ibid., p. 8). This is an expression of the Indian feeling that boundaries between friendly tribes were unnecessary, that if the Pend d'Oreille and Blackfeet tribes made peace there would be no more necessity for a boundary between them than for a boundary between the Piegan and Blood tribes.

The council proceedings of the first day were concluded without reaching an agreement on the Pend d'Oreille objection to their exclusion from the area reserved for the exclusive use of the Blackfeet tribes. When the council reconvened the next day Commissioner Stevens offered a compromise. "We will give to the Western Indians the liberty

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to hunt on the trail down the Muscle Shell to the Yellowstone. Thus the Blackfeet give to you the right to hunt in their country down the Muscle Shell." (Ibid., p. 8). The boundaries were then explained to the Indians, with the aid of the map and a rough sketch of the country drawn on a buffalo skin. The proceedings state, "The Indians appearing fully to comprehend and assent, no objections being made." (Ibid., p. 9).

The Commissioners then went on to explain other articles of the treaty. After all the articles were explained, there was discussion of the major objective of the council, major in terms of both Commissioner Mannypenny's instructions to the Commissioners and to the minds of the Indians. Onis-tay-say-nah-que-im, Head Chief of the Bloods, pointed out a common problem in the tribal government of these tribes. "I wish to say that as far as we old men are concerned we want peace and to cease going to war; but I am afraid we cannot stop our young men." (Ibid., p. 10). No satisfactory solution to this problem was proposed.

B
[622]

The treaty was signed by the Commissioners and by 15 Piegan chiefs (only one of which, Mountain Chief, may have been a prominent North Piegan chief), 8 Blooc chiefs (probably representing a majority of the Blood bands at that time), 4 North Blackfeet chiefs (certainly representing a minority of the bands of their tribe), 8 Gros Ventre chiefs (probably a majority of the bands being represented). It was also signed by 12 Nez Perce chiefs, and 15 chiefs of the "Flathead Nation", which included both Flathead and Pend d'Oreille.

[p. 123]

15: Ewers E,G-4,5 (1941-1949) 1950 NF6 Blackfoot NF6
Gros Ventre NQ13

B
G The area described as the territory of the Blackfoot
175 Nation in this treaty[A] included Royce Areas 399, 574, and area 565
648 as far east as a line drawn directly north from the mouth of Milk
131 River to the international boundary. No effort was made to dis-
[101] tinguish the territories of the three Blackfeet tribes from one another or to distinguish their territories from that of the Gros Ventre. However, the Assiniboin were granted "the right of hunting in common with the Blackfeet, in the country lying between the aforesaid eastern boundary line, running from the mouth of Milk River to the forty-ninth parallel, and a line drawn from the left bank of the Missouri River, opposite Round Butte, north to the forty-ninth parallel." This concession to the Assiniboin actually was made by the Gros Ventre alone, since the Blackfeet tribes did not hunt in that area. It reflects the Gros Ventre acknowledgment of Assiniboin right to hunt in the valley of the Milk River as well as their friendly relations with the Assiniboin since 1851.

B It is my belief that the reason the Blackfeet tribes made
[161] no objection at the council to the area set aside for their exclusive use was that this area, plus the large area over which they hunted in the British Possessions was much more than was adequate for the support of Doty's estimated total of 850 lodges or 7,650 souls for the North Blackfeet, Blood, North Piegan and South Piegan Indians.

B It was considerably larger than the area actually occupied
175 by these tribes as Doty described it in 1854 and as his field
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[p. 124]

221 [A] [i.e., the treaty of 1855--Analyst]

B Possibly the continued friendship with the Flathead caused
648 the Small Robes to summer south of the Missouri where they could
175 visit with the Flathead when they came over the Rockies to hunt buffalo
131 221 along the Musselshell. It is possible some of the 54 lodges seen by
[162] Lt. Mullins were occupied by Flathead visitors. Agent Vaughan esti-
[563] mated the Piegan (both North and South) at 460 lodges. (Annual Report
Comm. Ind. Aff., 1860, p. 308). The 54 lodges in the Small Robes camp
that summer must have comprised less than 10% of the total Piegan
population.

B It appears probable that the Commissioners of the 1855 Treaty
G with the Blackfoot Nation extended the boundary of these people south-
175 648 eastward to meet and conform with the northwestern boundary of the
131 Crow territory as defined in the Fort Laramie Treaty of 1851. (See
Royce Area 517). If so this boundary was located by precedent rather
than on the basis of Indian occupancy at the time of the 1855 treaty.

B As an instrument of intertribal peace the 1855 treaty with
175 the Blackfoot was unsuccessful. Agent Hatch reported that Blood
648 Indians war parties started for the Crow camps within ten days of the
721 signing of the treaty and that many others followed. The haughty
Blood warriors passed through Piegan and Gros Ventre camps and
ridiculed them for listening to the advice of the whites. (Annual
Report Comm. Ind. Affairs, 1856, pp. 75-76). That same winter the
Blackfeet were fighting the Assiniboin on their eastern front.
(Montana Hist. Soc. Contribs., Vol. X, p. 157). Peace with the tribes
west of the Rockies lasted but little longer. John Owen, trader
among the Flathead wrote on June 30, 1860, "Since the treaty of /55

the Blackfeet have made frequent predatory Excursions to the different Camps from (on) this side and have run off Many horses. (Owen, Vol. 2, p. 215). B 175 649 ● 721

B G 171 Nor did the treaty prevent the tribes north of the Flathead on the west side of the Rockies from exercising what they continued to regard as their traditional right to hunt buffalo on the plains in the region set aside for the exclusive occupancy of the Blackfeet Nation. Alexander, head chief of the Pend d'Oreille, even though he had signed the treaty, continued to lead his tribe across the Rockies to hunt in the designated Blackfeet country. In 1860 he led his winter hunt across the Blackfeet territory as far as Milk River, where the Pend d'Oreille camp was attacked by Cree and Assiniboin, 20 of his people were killed and 25 wounded, and 290 of his horses were stolen. John Owen, who recorded this disaster, met Alexander and his footsore, defeated people on their return from their 400 mile retreat across the plains and mountains. The spunky old chief was thirsting for revenge. (John Owen, Vol. 2, pp. 234-235). As late as the fall of 1875, the Blackfeet agent reported a visit of 20 lodges of Pend d'Oreille who had crossed the Rockies to hunt north of the Marias River in Blackfeet territory. (Agent Wood's Letter Book, Oct. 8, 1875. The Museum of the Plains Indian, Browning, Montana.)

Likewise, the Kutenai, north of the Pend d'Oreille continued to exercise what they believed to be their aboriginal right of hunting B [721]

[p. 127]

Indians to give up buffalo hunting and turn to growing crops. B
Feeling insecure so near the trail from Fort Benton to the mines, 175
Little Dog left his farm and returned to the nomadic camps of his 177
people. (Annual Report Comm. Ind. Affairs, 1863, p. 180). [241]

In 1864 the Territory of Montana was created, and its B
new Governor Edgerton, in his first speech to the new Territorial G
Legislature voiced a popular hope among the white settlers, that 175
"the Government will, at an early date, take steps for the extinguish- 648
ment of Indian title in this territory, in order that our lands may be brought into market." (Montana Historical Society Contribs., Vol. 3, p. 344).

In 1865 Blackfeet Agent Gad E. Upson was instructed by the Commissioner of Indian Affairs to negotiate a treaty with the Blackfeet tribes and the Gros Ventre under which they would agree to cede their land south of the Missouri and south of a line from the 48th parallel on the Rocky Mountains to the Teton River and down the Teton and Marias to the Missouri in return for annual payments to the value of $50,000 for a period of 20 years. (Annual Report Comm. Indian Affairs, 1865, 250-252).

At Fort Benton on Nov. 16, 1865, Commissioners Upson and Thomas F. Meagher, Acting Governor and ex officio Supt. of Indian Affairs for Montana Territory, concluded the treaty which was signed by 16 Piegan chiefs, 9 Blood ones, and 14 Gros Ventre chiefs, as

B nation have violated the treaty - obligatory upon them from the
G time it was made - I cannot recommend its ratification, but submit
175 the papers for your consideration and for such directions as you
648 may see fit to give in the premises." (D. N. Cooley to James Harlan,
B
[721] April 12, 1866. Indian Office Records. The National Archives).

Three years later Commissioner of Indian Affairs N. G. Taylor stated that this unratified treaty was still on file in his office. "I think that better arrangements can be made with the Blackfeet than this treaty proposes, and do not therefore recommend that it be ratified." (Annual Report Comm. Ind. Affairs, 1868, p. 223).

Although the Indians did not understand ratification, and certainly didn't know this treaty would not be ratified, their withdrawal to lands north of the Teton following the treaty was due more to hostile relations with white settlers than to their desire to comply with the stipulations of the treaty. On July 25, 1866, Acting Agent Hiram D. Upham reported from the Agency at Fort Benton:

B "Bloods, Blackfeet and most of the North Piegans are at
175 open war with the whites as well as with other tribes of Indians.
721 They live for the most part in the British possessions, and only
648 come here to receive their annuity goods or to commit some depredations. Many of them have never been here at all."

B He also stated that 350 or 400 lodges of Lower Piegans live
175 on the headwaters of Milk River and the Marias. They were led by two
131

head chiefs Little Dog and Big Lake. (Annual Report Comm. Ind. Aff., 175
1866, p. 203). 131

Two months later the new Blackfeet Agent, George B. Wright reported that 375 lodges of the Lower (South) Piegan were on Marias River, along with some 40 lodges of Blood Indians. "The balance of the Blood Indians are with the Upper Piegans, in the British Possessions." Of the North Blackfeet he wrote, .. "they are still, as they have been
for some time past, in the British possessions. They trade at Fort [439]
Edmonton...The treaty of last year they do not consider as binding [622]
upon them, for they were, numerically, poorly represented at that [648]
treaty by their chiefs and head men." (Annual Report Comm. Ind. Affairs, 1866, p. 204).

In 1868 W. J. Cullen was commissioned to make another treaty 175
with the Blackfeet, under which they would cede the same area south 648
of the Teton as specified in the 1865 unratified treaty. The other terms of this treaty were nearly identical with that earlier one, including the payments of $50,000 annually after ratification. The treaty was signed by large delegations of Piegan and Blood leaders, but again by only one North Blackfeet chief. (The treaty is on file in Indian Office Records, The National Archives).

But this treaty suffered the same fate as its predecessor
of 1865. It was not ratified. And for the same reason Blackfeet [721]
depredations against the white settlers in violation of promises of peace at the treaty.

[p.137]

The Piegans are encamped at various points upon this 131
Reservation, and have had great success during the winter in 657
killing buffalo." (May to Commissioner of Indian Affairs, March 6, 175
1874. Indian Office Records, The National Archives).

In early fall May wrote:

"For several years the ...Blackfeet and Bloods... have ranged across the line, none of the Blackfeet coming here, occasionally a few of the Bloods."

"The Piegans are in frequent intercourse with the Agency". (Annual Report Comm. Ind. Affairs, 1874, p. 259).

It is not surprising that none of the Blackfeet tribes were 131
upset when the Executive Order of July 5, 1873, restricted their land 175
to the area north of the Missouri and its western tributary Sun River. 648
The Piegan, southernmost of the Blackfeet tribes, had not lived south of Sun River for at least 8 years. And for some time prior to that the only Piegan hunting band occupying the area south of the Missouri was the Small Robes. The loss of Royce Area 399, was no handicap to the Blackfeet tribes in making a living in the year 1873.

But when the Piegan heard that the Government was contemplating the further restriction of their area, the movement of their southern boundary north to the Marias and its southern tributary of Birch Creek, that was a different matter. Cession of land north of the Teton meant giving up land on which they were currently dwelling and from which they were making a living.

131 On March 24, 1874, Agent May wrote to Commissioner of
175 Indian Affairs Edward P. Smith:

649 "Sir: Yesterday the Piegan Chief, Little Plume accompanied by several of his tribe, visited the Agency - and made known that a rumor had reached him and his people to the effect that it was in contemplation to remove the line of the Blackfoot Reservation to the Marias River. Little Plume says his people will never voluntarily consent to this change of line, for the reason it would confine them to too narrow strip of territory and deprive them of a large and desirable portion of their hunting ground.

I have conversed with a number of Piegans, and they are all decidedly opposed to the change, if contemplated. I wish to add, as my impression that the change would be unjust to the Indians, and cause great dissatisfaction.

Respectfully, R. F. May."

(May to Edward P. Smith, March 24, 1874, Indian Office Records, The National Archives.)

Agent May's letter to the Commissioner angered Martin Maginnis, Montana Territorial Delegate to Congress, who had introduced into Congress the bill to move the reservation boundary northward. On May 8, he wrote a letter to the *Helena Weekly Independent* stating in part, ... the bill which I introduced to move the Blackfoot Reservation back to the line of the Marias and Birch Creek has become a law. The present

Agency will be moved back on the Reservation and the Teton Valley 131
thrown open to settlement. The remonstrances of the present Agent 175
against this bill were received at the Department before its passage, 648
but it was passed and signed notwithstanding, and that too with the approval of the Department." (Helena Weekly Independent, May 22, 1874).

May then wrote Maginnis, "I am sure I do not overstate the case when I say the Indians residing upon this reservation are unanimous in their opposition to the change of line - that is the removal beyond the Teton - south of the Teton they do not care for....I could have sent to you for presentation to Congress a 'remonstrance' bearing more than two thousand Indian signatures, but I contented myself by sending to the Hon. Commissioner the substance of the words spoken by the Chief Little Plume, and I know, and knew then that he spoke the sentiments of his Tribe." (May to Martin Maginnis, May 25, 1874. Martin Maginnis Papers, The Montana Historical Society).

The Executive Order was issued April 15, 1874, moving the 131
southern boundary of the reservation northward from the Missouri 175
River- Sun River boundary to the Marias River-Birch Creek line, thus 648
freeing for white settlement Royce Area 574. 657

In his Annual Report Agent May again showed his indignation at this treatment of his Indians. "To take from peaceable, friendly Indians a very large portion of their best hunting and pasture land without consultation or remuneration, is a violation of the wise and

131 "Christian policy of the Government." (Annual Report Comm. Indian
175 Affairs, 1874, p. 260). Agent May took no steps to comply with
648 the Executive Order and he was removed from his office.
651

His successor, John S. Wood entered on duty January 24, 1875. On February 15, he wrote the Commissioner: "The Indians would be satisfied if the South Bank of the Teton was made the line of the reservation." (Wood to Comm. Ind. Affairs, Feb. 15, 1875. Indian Office Records, The National Archives).

131 In The National Archives, Indian Office Records, there is
175 a report from Andrew Dusold, Detective for the Blackfeet Agency to
311 Agent Wood dated February 12, 1875, explaining the importance of
221 the area between the Teton and Birch Creek to the Indians. The
Indians had used and in fact were at that time using the valley of
the Teton for winter camps. He stated, "Piegans and Blackfeet are
camped on this stream in different camps for a distance of 55 miles
[372] from the Agency." The Teton offered the Indians an abundance of
firewood, whereas none of the smaller streams between the Teton
and Birch Creek afforded sufficient firewood for their winter camps.
He pointed out that very few Indians encamped on the forks of the
Marias in winter, but camped on the Teton and the main Marias where
the buffalo ranged; that most of the timber along the Marias was on
the south side of the river, which would be outside the boundaries

[p. 144]

of the new reservation; that there was no problem in summer "as the 131
Indians will move to the Mountains and will camp along the described 175
Forks of the Marias, hunting for small game, or will make their camp 311
in the vicinity of the "Three Buttes" or "Sweet Grass Hills". He 221
explained that "The Indians will and must follow the range of the Buffalo in winter:- In the beginning of Winter when the Buffalo appear from the North, their Range is away from the Mountains, crossing the Marias below its forks, ranging South-East, crossing the Teton about 30 miles below the Agency, and then crossing the Missouri River about 20 miles below Fort Shaw." Dusold also stated "The Piegans, Bloods and Blackfeet range to the line of Longitude 111 degrees". This would place the eastern limit of the Blackfeet tribes' range in the United States at that time in the neighborhood of the East Butte of the Sweet Grass Hills, and a little west of the big bend of the Marias.

It was on the basis of these practical considerations - 175
the known winter range of the buffalo and the Indians' requirements 648
for winter firewood - that Dusold recommended revision of the south 657
boundary of the Reservation so as to include the Teton River within 131
it. (Andrew Dusold, to John Wood February 12, 1875, Indian Office Records, The National Archives).

In the light of Dusold's explanation the Indian opposition to movement of the boundary north to Birch Creek makes much sense.

[p.145]

175 It was not based upon mere whim or obstinancy on their part. It was
648 based upon their current needs for making a living in their country.

657 Meanwhile white settlers were applying pressure to make the
131 Indians move north of the newly established boundary. The Agency on
[177] the Teton was becoming untenable. On February 2, 1875, Agent Wood
reported that "partys here have preempted and filed claims covering
the farm and stockade of this Agency and it makes matters here very
[823] unpleasant for an Agent." He found that the Indians "have a great
love for this portion of the Country as their forefathers lived here and are buried here." He found that Agent May had led the Indians to believe that he would get the land back for them, which complicated his task. Yet he reported, "I have the consent of the greater portion of them to go to the new reservation and am told that there is plenty of wood, water and grass and the most of the buffalo is in that section of the country." (Wood to Comm. Ind. Affairs, Feb. 2, 1875. Indian Office Records. The National Archives.)

On May 14, Wood reported that within the past six weeks Indians visiting the Agency had between 75 and 100 horses stolen from them by whites, so that the Indians didn't want to return to the Agency on the Teton. (Wood to Commissioner of Indian Affairs, May 14, 1875. Indian Office Records, The National Archives). In the same letter Wood explained that he had selected a site for a new Agency on Badger Creek about 10 miles from the mountains.

[p. 146]

The new Agency was constructed on the site now known as 175
Running Crane's property, and early in November 1876, 19 months 648
after the Executive Order of April 15, 1874, the headquarters of 657
the Blackfeet Agency was moved north within the boundaries of the 131
reservation established by that order.

Further proof of the withdrawal of the Blood and North 657
Blackfeet into Canada is available in the action of the Indians on 175
the Blackfeet Reservation in Montana, under the guidance and at the 671
instigation of Agent Wood, of organizing and adopting a code of laws 622
for their conduct in April 1875. A council was called of the headmen 623
(chiefs) of bands to elect a head chief and two subordinate chiefs
and to draft a code of laws to be administered by those chiefs in
cooperation with the Agent. Of the fifteen chiefs of bands who
took part in this council, I recognize the name of only one, "One-who-pulls-the-sun-down (or "Brings Down the Sun") a North Piegan
Chief, who was not of the South Piegan division. Certainly the head
chief they elected, Little Plume, and the two subordinate chiefs,
Generous Woman and White Calf, were all chiefs of well known South
Piegan bands. My field data indicate that Little Plume was chief
of the Worm Band; Generous Woman chief of the Fat Roasters (or
Grease Melters); and White Calf chief of the Skunks band. (The
original of this document including the code of laws adopted April 23,
1875, is in the Indian Office Records, The National Archives).

[p.147]

175 Two years later the withdrawal of the North Blackfeet,
648 Blood and North Piegan Indians from the United States culminated
in their negotiation of a treaty with the Dominion of Canada. At
Blackfoot Crossing on Bow River, September 22, 1877, these Indians
along with the Sarcees and the Stonies (the northwestern division of
the Assiniboin) signed Treaty No. 7 under which they agreed to behave
and conduct themselves as good and loyal subjects of Her Majesty the
[131] Queen (Victoria). Under the conditions of this treaty they
surrendered to the crown all their lands, comprising some 50,000
square miles lying westward of the Cypress Hills, northward of the
[657] international boundary and east of the Rocky Mountains. In return
the Canadian Government agreed to permit the Indians to continue to
hunt throughout this vast tract and assigned reserves to each tribe
within the area of sufficient size to permit the Indians to allow 1
square mile for each family of five. (Morris, contains the complete
text and proceedings of this treaty).

175 The Blackfeet, Bloods and Sarcees first took a reservation
657 in common on both sides of Bow River above and below Blackfoot Crossing.
131 But they did not get on well together and in the next year the
[648] Bloods were transferred to a new location on the Belly River and the
[578] Sarcees to the Elbow above Calgary. The Blackfeet remained near
Blackfoot Crossing. The North Piegan located on a reservation in the
Porcupine Hills on Oldman River above Fort Macleod. All of these
reservations are in the Canadian Province of Alberta.

[P.148]

reservations are in the Canadian Province of Alberta. 000

Since that time these organized tribes have been recognized 648 ● subjects of the British Empire. They have had no official relations with the United States Government.

VI. Period of the Extermination of the Buffalo and the South Piegan Land Agreements (1878-1900).

In 1878, the year after Treaty No. 7, Agent Young reported 175 from the Blackfeet Agency in Montana that the Indians were "now 648 calling themselves by the general name Piegan". (Annual Report Comm. Ind. Affairs, 1878, p. 82). It would have been strange indeed if they didn't, for those hunting bands organized under the code of laws and then properly wards of the United States were Piegan Indians. They were more properly South Piegan, since the North Piegan, along with the Blood and North Blackfeet had chosen to become subjects of the Canadian Government rather than wards of the United States.

At that time the South Piegan were under the leadership 657 of White Calf, chief of the Skunks band, who had been elected head 101 chief of the tribe in October 1877, following the death of Little 622 Plume. The South Piegan were divided into eleven hunting bands as 175 indicated by Agent Young's description of the distribution of annuities in the spring of 1879. "In the afternoon distributed the annuities to Big Nose Band, and Three Suns occupied in giving the annuities

657 to the other ten bands viz., White Calf, Running Crane, Fast Buffalo
101 Horse, Horse Head, No Runner, Red Paint, Tearing Lodge, Four Bears,
622 The Horn, The General, Big Lake and Lodge Pole Chief." (Agent
175 Young's Letter Book, May 6, 1879, Blackfeet Agency Archives, Museum
of the Plains Indian, Browning, Montana). Big Nose (also known as
Three Suns) probably was second chief of the South Piegan at the time.
Some of the bands must then have had more than one chief, since the
number of names exceeds eleven.

175 Ever since the 1855 treaty Blackfeet Agents had been trying
657 to interest their Indian charges in planting crops and tilling the
224 soil, but without rousing any great interest among the Indian buffalo
[241] hunters. In 1878 Young reported that "there are still a large number
who will only pursue the chase for a living, and until the game becomes too scarce to afford it, are not likely to give up their
roving mode of life." (Annual Report Comm. Indian Affairs, 1878, p.84).

224 In the winter of 1878-1879 Agent Young reported that one
175 large camp of his Indians, under White Calf made a successful hunt
near the Bearpaw Mountains. (Agent Young's Letter Book, Feb. 1, 1879.
Blackfeet Agency Archives). That summer the main camp was also hunting
near the Bearpaw Mountains. (Ibid., Aug. 1, 1879).

136 But by the winter of 1879-1880 the buffalo had been nearly
224 exterminated in the Blackfeet country in Canada. To minimize the
648 starvation among his wards the Canadian Indian Commissioner Edgar B.
Dewdney gave his Indians some provisions and advised them to cross

the line to hunt buffalo in Montana. He later claimed that this 136
action had saved the Canadian Government "at least $100,000." 224
(Sharp, 1955, p. 155, quotes the Dewdney correspondence on this 648
subject).

From then on the South Piegan were forced to hunt buffalo 224
where they could find them, on or off the reservation. They were 648
in competition for the dwindling game supply not only with other 175
Indians in Montana, but with the Blackfeet, Cree and Assiniboin
who came down from Canada after the buffalo had disappeared in their
own country. In the winter of 1879-1880 they went far south to the
Judith Basin. White men, disturbed by this great influx of red men [177]
onto their lands, protested that the Indians were killing cattle and
had the South Piegan escorted back north to their reservation by the
army. Agent Young later learned that cattle had been killed by young
men of Running Rabbit's North Piegan that winter on land south of
the reservation. (Agent Young Letter Book, Jan. 6, 1882. Blackfeet
Agency Archives).

From then on the number of Indians encamped near the Agency 657
on Badger Creek (then moved a few miles down stream from the Running 175
Crane site to the location still known as "Old Agency"), in winter 221
increased as the number of buffalo decreased. The South Piegan 136
remained buffalo hunters to the end. And the bitter end came in [731]
1883 and 1884 when upward of 400 of them starved to death after the [165]
buffalo were gone.

[p. 151]

657 648 131 175 In the fall of 1883, shortly after the buffalo were gone a Subcommittee of the Special Committee of the United States Senate, appointed to visit the Indian tribes of Montana, composed of Senator Vest of Missouri and Delegate Maginnis of Montana, met with the chiefs of the South Piegan at the Blackfeet Agency. They found the starving Indians quite willing to offer some of their gameless land in exchange for those things which would help them to make a living now that the buffalo were gone. In council on September 15, 1883, Chief Little Dog described theland that might be retained for their reservation and the land that might be given up. "I want a reservation with the Birch Creek on the south, as now. We like the land near the mountains. On the east you can draw a line from the western end of the Sweet Grass Hills to the Marias River. That would touch the river near Willow Round. The country between that and the mountains we would like to have. From that line down to the Bear Paw we have no use for the country. There is no game there. We don't want to go there. We would rather stay here where there are streams and good land, and where our homes lie. The reason I put the line so far east is that I want the people to have a good living; plenty of range for horses and stock. We want the Government to help us." (Report of the Subcommittee... to visit the Indian Tribes of Montana, pp. 242-243).

Head Chief White Calf, Little White Cow, Big Nose and Running Crane all spoke in support of Little Dog's proposal as to the lands to

be ceded. (Ibid., pp. 243-244). This description throws considerable 657
light upon tribal land claims upon the great northern reservation 648
(Royce Area 565). The South Piegan regarded the land as far eastward 131
as the Bearpaw Mountains as theirs, and of this they were willing to 175
cede that part which was of least value to them now that the buffalo were gone - ie. that part from the western end of the Sweet Grass Hills (ie. West Butte) eastward. The landmark "Willow Sound" in the text must be a misprint for "Willow Round" which was a former camping place of the Piegan on the Marias less than five miles east of its forks. (See the map in Ewers, 1955, Plate 7).

The Subcommittee recommended "the appointment of a commission to treat with the tribes for part of their lands". (Report of Subcommittee etc., p. 234). But apparently Mr. Maginnis decided not to wait for the action of such a commission. On February 25, 1884, he introduced into the House of Representatives a bill "To provide permanent reservations for the Indians in Northern Montana, and for other purposes", which provided for a reservation for the "Piegan, Blood and Blackfeet Indians belonging to the Blackfeet Agency" in the western portion of the existing large reservation, west of "a line drawn due south from the national boundary, at the western extremity of the Sweet Grass Hills to the Maria's River". (H.R. 5427, 48th Congress, 1st Session). A similar bill (S. 1710) was introduced in the Senate by Senator Vest on March 4, 1884. However, the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, expressed his disapproval of the Bill,

657 although he seemed to have no specific objection to that portion of
648 it dealing with the Blackfeet Reservation and its establishment.
131 (Commissioner of Indian Affairs, to The Secretary of the Interior,
175 April 3, 1884. The National Archives, Record Group 233).

657 By Act of May 15, 1886, The Northwest Commission was
648 appointed to negotiate with the Indians in the great reservation north
175 of the Missouri (Royce Area 565). On February 8, 1887, the members of
this Commission (John V. Wright, J. V. Daniels, and C. F. Larrabee) arrived at the Blackfeet Agency after taking 16 days to make the last 100 miles of their journey northward from Sun River under abominable weather conditions, with as much as 2 feet of snow and temperatures as low as 50 degrees below zero. No minutes of their council with the Blackfeet (South Piegan) were taken, but the Commissioners' Report of Negotiations, dated Blackfeet Agency February 11, 1887, is in The National Archives. (Indian Office Records, Special Case 144). This report is sufficient to show that the Indians originally demanded $3,000,000 for the relinquishment of their interest in the surplus lands of the reservation and stubbornly refused to accept the Commissioners' offer of $125,000 per annum. "Finally, however, after long and patient reasoning with them they agreed to accept $150,000 per annum for the period mentioned".

The Commissioners reported that the Indians' demands for a proportionately greater sum for their land cessions than was agreed

upon by the Indians of Fort Peck and Fort Belknap Agencies were 657
based upon two arguments. Both of them appear to me to have been 648
spurious. 175

The First argument was based on population - that there "are more than 2,000 Indians at present attached to the Agency, and there are from 500 to 1,000 on the other side of the international line, who properly belong to the agency, and are likely to return sooner or later." This argument took advantage of the ignorance of
the Commissioners. My elderly Indian informants on the Blackfeet [115]
Reservation in the early 1940s recalled that it was a favorite Indian device among the Blackfeet tribes on both sides of the line at that period to play both ends against the middle and receive annuities from both countries, and that they were able to get away with it in view of the poor records of individual Indians then kept
at the Agencies. If we will refer to the Appendix on Indian Popula- [162]
tions accompanying this report[A] we will see that the populations of [161]
the Blackfeet Reservation in 1887 was officially listed as 1,927 and that it did not exceed 2,293 in any year from that time until 1900. There is no sharp rise of from 500 to 1,000 souls such as this argument promised.

The second argument was based upon longer occupancy 657
- that "these Indians, no doubt have the most ancient claim upon 648
the ceded territory - as far eastward as the mouth of Milk River. 175
131

[p. 155]

[A]. [Missing from this copy--Analyst]

175 They occupied it as far back as their history is known, and they
657 naturally feel that they have a stronger claim to it than any of
648 the other Indians." As brought out in the earlier sections of this
131 report, the Piegan were not aboriginal occupants of this area (Royce
Area 565). Like the Gros Ventre they entered it after the smallpox
epidemic of 1781. They did not occupy the region north of the
Missouri as far as the mouth of Milk River. That was Gros Ventre
territroy.

175 The reduction of the lands of the South Piegan and their
657 establishment on the Blackfeet Reservation in Montana was approved
648 and became law by Act of Congress May 1, 1888. The reservation is
Royce Area 695.

175 None of the land ceded by the South Piegan under this Agree-
657 ment was occupied by them at the time. At the time of the cession the
361 Blackfeet owned some 30 head of cattle. They were living within a
[231] limited area on the southwestern part of their reservation within a
radious of less than 15 miles of their Agency, where they received
[433] weekly rations from the Government. The Agents' Annual Report in
the summer of 1888 stated that they then cultivated 340 acres of
land, and estimated that 83% of their subsistence was obtained from
Government rations, 12% from labor in civilized pursuits and 5% from
hunting, fishing, root gathering etc. (Annual Report Comm. Indian
Affairs, 1888, p. 419, 436).

the starvation winter. 361

In addition to these groups on Badger Creek, Adam White 657
Man stated that the following bands, the remainder of the tribe, 101
lived on the next stream southward, Birch Creek:

The Blood Band, under Chief Fast Buffalo Horse.

The All Chiefs, under Chief Horn.

The Skunks, under Head Chief White Calf.

This accounts for the location of the 11 bands of the South Piegan in that period. Adam White Man stated that it was not until after the land Agreement negotiated in 1887 that the Indians began to move north and establish permanent homes north of Badger Creek.

This information appears to be confirmed by Agent Baldwin's 361
Annual Report of August 22, 1888, in which he states: 657

"Heretofore their farm work was confined to Birch and 241
Badger Creek bottoms. This season about 150 acres on Two Medicine 311
Creek were plowed and sown with potatoes, oats and barley. On Cut 175
Bank Creek about 70 acres were broken and planted with like seed, and on both sides of the White Tail Creeks a number of patches of ground have been plowed and planted, all of which promises a fair return for their labor." (Annual Report Comm. Ind. Aff. 1888, p. 151).

Undoubtedly this northern movement over the reservation 657
reflected the hope of the Indians for better times ahead with the 361
assistance they were about to receive from the Government under the [648]

657 terms of the Agreement. They had traded land for an opportunity
361 to make a living. In 1890 some 1,000 heifers and 25 bulls were
[648] issued to these Indians and additional issues of cattle were made
[231] in subsequent years. In 1893 Agent George Steel stated: "The
[425] Indians are now well scattered out over the reservation on ranches
which they have selected, instead of being bunched up in bands as
formerly." (Annual Report Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1893,
p. 172). By scattered, he of course meant scattered along the river
valleys, where, like their ancestors of buffalo days, the Indians'
homes were sheltered from the elements in winter, and ready access
to firewood and drinking water.

433 The South Piegan were prospering under the new Agreement.
657 By 1896 there were more than 500 different cattle brands on the
368 reservation stock book. (Annual Report of the Commissioner of
[231] Indian Affairs, 1896, p. 176). The building of the Great Northern
[175] Railway across the reservation in the early '90s, the opening of
the new boarding school on Willow Creek in 1892 and the movement of
the Blackfeet Agency to present Browning, north of the railroad in
March 1895, further encouraged the development of the northern portion
[361] of the reservation. This movement of settlement was from north to
south on the plains, not westward into the mountainous area of the
reservation.

000 In his annual Report for the year 1893 Agent George Steell,

In his annual Report for the year 1893 Agent George Steell, 657
who had known the South Piegan for some 40 years, wrote: 311

"The western border of this reservation is the summit 175
of the Rocky Mountains. Eastward from the summit for an average 177
distance of 20 miles the country is very mountainous and broken, and totally unfit for grazing or agriculture. It is of no use to the Indians, as they do not even hunt the game it contains. This section is said to contain considerable mineral, and I am constantly having trouble with the whites, who are persistently prospecting it. A police force many times larger than I have would hardly be able to patrol it, and the Indians are continually worrying, saying the whites are stealing their gold, and that when the Government gets ready to buy it the mineral will have been carried off and they will get little or nothing. I suggest that a strip of the western border of the reservation, at least 20 miles in width, be sold and the proceeds be placed to the credit of the Indians as an additional fund for their support and maintenance." (Annual Report Comm. Ind. Aff., 1893, p. 172-173).

In September 1895, another Commission met with the South 657
Piegan on the Blackfeet Reservation to negotiate for the cession of 648
this troublesome western area of the reservation. (The Proceedings 175
of the Commissioners are Doc. No. 51,494, 1895, in the Indian Office Records, The National Archives). The Commissioners visited the western portion of the reservation with the aim of determining

657 where a line could be drawn which would separate the mineral
648 bearing land from the grazing lands and as much of the timber
175 lands as possible.

In the council with the Indians which followed they again asked $3,000,000 for the area to be ceded. This was more than the Commissioners believed they were authorized to agree to. At the conclusion of the session on Sept. 23, there appeared no possibility of an agreement being reached. But when the council convened again on Sept. 25, after the Indian leaders had conferred with Agent Steell, Joe Kipp the old trader, and Joe Cook the butcher, Head Chief White Calf offered to cede the mountainous strip from Birch Creek to the international boundary, with all grazing land excluded and retaining the Indians' right to hunt, fish and obtain timber in the mountain area for one and one-half million dollars. The Agreement was concluded on this basis on Sept. 26, 1895, and signed by the Commissioners and 306 of the total adult male population of the Blackfeet Reservation of 381.

This agreement extended for another 10 years the assistance which the Government had inaugurated with the conclusion of the previous land agreement in the '80s.

657
177 It is impossible to assess the value of this assistance in terms of money alone. It provided the South Piegan, weakened by short rations after the buffalo suddenly disappeared, with no knowledge or experience in making a living in a world in which there were no

[p. 162]

B At the same time it should be pointed out that the South
657 Piegan ceded none of their occupied lands under these agreements,
648 and that they retained a far higher ratio of land to population than was granted to their relatives in Canada, the North Piegan, Blood and North Blackfeet.

B If the South Piegan's land seems small today in comparison
657 to their population it is due to two factors (1) the relinquishment
161 of ownership to land by individual Indians since the period these
[425] B agreements expired and (2) the phenomenal growth of the South Piegan
[162] population since that time. As recently as 1910 their population was 2,268, and the Bureau of the Census commented, "Since 1885 there has been little change in numbers". (Indian Population in the United
B States and Alaska, 1910. Washington, 1915, p. 75). No one at that
[162] time or prior to it would have predicted that their numbers would have nearly tripled in the next thirty years (ie. 5,914 in 1950).

VII. The Gros Ventre and their Allies in the Milk River Country. (1862-1890).

G Basic to an understanding of the problems of Gros Ventre
648 land occupancy in this period is some understanding of their inter-
101 tribal relations during this period. Although some Government
[121] officials continued to regard them as a part of the so-called "Blackfoot
B Nation" for years after the 1855 treaty they definitely were not. In
[648] 1862 they not only were not allies of the Blackfeet tribes - they were

enemies and throughout the remainder of buffalo days they remained G
apart from and generally hostile to the Blackfeet. 648

Yet the Gros Ventre were numerically a small tribe. In 101
1860 Agent Vaughan estimated their population at 265 lodges, with B
a total population of 2,100, of which only 400 were men. (Annual [648] ●
Report Comm. Indian Affairs, 1858, p. 308). By contrast, the Blackfeet G
tribes were estimated by Vaughan at 910 lodges and 1,660 men. (Ibid., 161
p. 308). The Piegan alone had 900 men, roughly twice the manpower of B 161
the Gros Ventre. (Ibid., p. 308). 162

To protect themselves against the powerful and warlike G
Blackfeet tribes, as well as against the powerful Sioux who were 648
pressing westward from present North Dakota as the buffalo became scarce in their former hunting ground, it was necessary for the Gros Ventre to ally themselves with and to share their hunting grounds with segments of other tribes which were enemies of the Blackfeet tribes and had been displaced by the aggressive Sioux from their own territories. These allies were primarily the River Crow, the northern segment of the Crow Indians, and the Upper Assiniboin, the southwestern segment of the Assiniboin.

So from the early '60s until the extermination of the buffalo the Gros Ventre could not claim sole occupancy of their
hunting grounds. During this period also Gros Ventre population G
declined due to war losses, a serious smallpox epidemic in 1869-70, 161

[p. 165] 165

G and starvation as the buffalo became extinct as a wild species in
161 their country.

165 Piegan-Gros Ventre relations were strained at the time
G of the 1855 treaty. In the fall of 1861 a Pend d'Oreille war
648 party stole horses from the Gros Ventre camp on the Missouri about
721 35 to 40 miles below Fort Benton, and to throw their pursuers off their
175 track as they headed homeward the clever horse thieves left some of
B
648 the stolen horses near a Piegan camp on the Marias some 12 miles from
175 Fort Benton. The Gros Ventre, recognizing their horses and believing
the Piegan had taken them, attacked the Piegan camp and killed an
old chief. (Bradley, Vol. 9, p. 313-314).

B Thus warfare between these old allies was inaugurated. In
G the following winter the fur trader, Charles Larpenteur, found that
648 because of their war with the Piegan the Gros Ventre were afraid to
721 take their robes to Fort Benton to trade. (Larpenteur, Vol. 2, p. 335).
175 And Father De Smet, who traveled up the Missouri to Fort Benton by
steamboat in the summer of 1862, commented, "A war between the Gros
Ventres and other Blackfeet bands rendered traveling in the country
somewhat unsafe." (Chittenden and Richardson, Vol. 4, p. 1512).

When the unratified treaty of 1865 was made with "The Blackfoot Nation" at Fort Benton in the fall of 1865, the Commissioners had difficulty getting the Gros Ventre leaders to come in to take part in the negotiations. When they did come the Gros Ventre camped apart at the other end of the bottom land from the Blackfeet tribes, and the

whites had considerable difficulty in preventing the Blackfeet from B
attacking the Gros Ventre camp after the negotiations were ended. G
(Hamilton, 1907, pp. 648-649). Hamilton explained, "for the last 648
four years they had been at war and there was the bitterest hatred 721
between them." (Ibid., p. 648). 175

Undoubtedly their warfare with the stronger Blackfeet tribes caused the Gros Ventre to withdraw to the southeast. Agent Upson reported in 1864 that the Gros Ventre "occupy the extreme eastern portion of the Blackfeet lands, in the vicinity of Milk River, near its mouth."
He estimated their number at 233 lodges or 1,864 souls, a reduction from G
Vaughan's estimate of four years earlier. (Annual Report Comm. Ind. 161
Affairs, 1864, p. 296). At the same time the River Crow were "at or G
about the mouth of the Muscle Shell river, having been driven by 648
the Sioux from their country on the Yellowstone river." (Ibid., p. 263). 175
These two tribes, both harrassed by more powerful neighbors, joined forces and hunted northward in Gros Ventre territory.

On February 2, 1866, Acting Agent Upham wrote, "The Gros G
Ventres and Crows are camped near together." He reported that Gros 648
Ventre chiefs complained, "Why do the whites sit still and let the 721
Piegans and Bloods steal their horses and kill them like dogs?" 175
(Annual Report Comm. Ind. Aff. 1866, p. 199). The following summer B
the allied Gros Ventre-Crow attacked a large Piegan camp consisting [721]
of nearly all the bands of that tribe near the Cypress Hills. The [175]

"Although the Gros Ventres are a part of the Blackfeet B
Nation, yet they are not on friendly terms with the other tribes G
composing that nation, live away from them, and, it is understood, 648
speak a different language. These, in my judgment, should be treated 101
with separately, and as they are friendly toward, and associate with, 175
the River Crows, no doubt the best disposition that could be made would be to place them upon a reservation with that tribe." So wrote N. G. Taylor, Commissioner of Indian Affairs to the Secretary of the Interior on April 18, 1868. (Annual Report Comm. Ind. Affairs, 1868, p. 224).

Although the Gros Ventre participated in both the 1865 G
and 1868 treaties with the "Blackfeet Nation" the lands described 648
for cession in these unratified treaties had not been ones occupied 175
by that tribe. Anything they might have gained from such cessions would have been pure gain without any compensating loss of land. Nevertheless, they like the Blackfeet tribes were disappointed when no annuities were received due to failure of these treaties to be ratified.

By 1869 the Gros Ventre on Milk River were shifting their preference from the River Crow to the Upper Assiniboin, their neighbors
to the east. During the summer of 1868 the Gros Ventre married about G
100 of the Assiniboin women which the Agent wrote "will have a tendency [582]
to cement these two tribes together". However, these Assiniboin and

[p. 169]

hunted farther west between the Bearpaw Mountains and the Little G
Rockies, and with them were their friends the Northern Arapaho 727
and Cheyenne. Frequently the Gros Ventre joined the River Crow 648
to hunt in the Judith Basin and south of the Missouri. (Annual 131
Report Comm. Ind. Affairs, 1871, pp. 430-431). 175

In 1872 the Cowan Commission was sent west to investigate B
conditions. Upon their recommendation the Milk River Agency was G
abandoned and two new Agencies established - Fort Belknap farther 657
west on Milk River (near present Chinook) and the first Fort Peck 131
Agency, on the Missouri, just above the mouth of Milk River. In 175
the same year that these Agencies were built the large northern 648
reservation was established comprising all of Montana north of the
Missouri and its western tributary, the Sun River, by the Executive
Order of July 5, 1873. This area was designated as a "reservation
for the Gros Ventre, Piegan, Blood, Blackfeet, River Crow, and
other Indians of the Territory of Montana." (Kappler, 1904, pp.
855-856). (Royce Area 565).

The land ceded by the Indians as a result of this Order G
did not include any of the area then occupied by the Gros Ventre 648
north of the Missouri River, nor did the land ceded by the 175
Executive Order of April 15, 1874, (Royce Area 574). 657

In 1874 the Gros Ventre numbered 960, and the Upper [161]

[p. 173]

G Assiniboin (also assigned to Fort Belknap Agency) totaled almost
648 twice that number (1,700). In addition "bands of Lower Assiniboines
657 and of Northern Assiniboines and of Northern Crees from British
175 America, to the number of 1,000 are often camped with the Indians
[161] of this agency." (Annual Report Comm. Ind. Affairs, 1874, p. 50).
[136] At that time game was abundant in the region and the Indians had
undertaken no farming operations. (Ibid., p. 50). The River Crow, named in the Executive Order of July 5, 1873, preferred to join their kinsmen the Mountain Crow on the Crow Reservation farther south. Actually the majority of the River Crow (50 of some 90) lodges were living in the south when the Executive Order was issued. (Annual Report Comm. Ind. Aff., 1873, p. 248). So the joint occupancy of land north of the Missouri by the Gros Ventre and Crow lasted for just about a decade, or from 1864 to 1874.

G In 1874 the Gros Ventre and Assiniboin were sandwiched
B between two of the most powerful and warlike peoples on the Great
648 Plains - the Sioux on the east and the Blackfeet on the west.
721 Their retreat from the Sioux had taken them closer to the Blackfeet.
175 Blackfeet Agent May reported a battle between the Piegan under Black
G Eagle against an Assiniboin and Gros Ventre force in which four
[101] Piegan were killed. The fight took place on January 20, 1874, between
the Milk River and Bearpaw Mountains. (May to Comm. Indian Affairs,
G Jan. 24, 1874, Indian Office Records, The National Archives). On
B May 16 of that year the Piegan signed separate treaties of peace
728
175

[p. 174]

with the Gros Ventre and Assiniboin at Fort Benton. (The signed B
treaties are in The National Archives, Indian Office Records). G
However, like virtually all peace negotiations between Blackfeet 728 175
chiefs and the chiefs of neighboring tribes, they were of little B
practical value, because the ambitious young men refused to abide [571]
by them. The Gros Ventre - Piegan peace lasted less than eight B
months. In early December 1874, a Piegan war party killed a Gros G
Ventre in sight of Fort Benton. (Bradley, Vol. 9, p. 314). Several 721
of my own elderly Piegan and Blood Indian informants of the early [175]
1940s, who took active part in the intertribal warfare of the late [115]
1870s and early 1880s told me of their exploits against the Gros
Ventre and Assiniboin. The Blackfeet tribes did not become really B
friendly with the Gros Ventre and Assiniboin until after 1885. G

The number of the Assiniboin sharing the western portion 648
of the former Gros Ventre country with the Gros Ventre varied from G
year to year as large groups or families moved back and forth between 648
the Upper and Lower Assiniboin. In 1875 as many as 3,500 175
Upper Assiniboin were reported. (Annual Report Comm. Ind. Affairs, G
1875, p. 307). When, in 1876, the Government attempted to consolidate 657
the Fort Peck Agency for the Gros Ventre, Assiniboin and neighboring 648
Sioux, Fort Belknap Agency was discontinued. The Upper Assiniboin 175
consented to move to Wolf Point, but the Gros Ventre refused to go
there because of their fear of the Sioux. (Annual Report Comm. Ind.
Affairs, 1876, p. 93). That summer the Indians of Fort Peck Agency G

[p. 175] [131]

we first hear of Piegan living in the area around the Missouri B
headwaters. This was the Small Robes band, a once large and independent 131
band living apart from the other hunting bands of the 175
tribe. They dared to make friends with the Flathead and to hunt [648]
with them in the headwaters region. So this debatable land became
a common hunting ground. Smallpox (1837) and a disastrous defeat
by the Crow in 1846 greatly reduced the numbers of this band, so
that near the close of this period or shortly thereafter they withdrew
northward and eastward into Royce Area 399.

In this period the Pend d'Oreille and Kutenai continued B
to hunt buffalo on the plains farther northward in Royce Area 565 G
at least as far eastward as the Sweet Grass Hills. So the tribes 131
of the so-called "Blackfoot Nation" were not exclusive occupants 101
of that region. Furthermore, the eastern portion of Royce Area 175
565, as far west as the lower Milk River to its mouth was occupied
by the Assiniboin.

8. At the Treaty of Fort Laramie a portion of land south B
and east of the Missouri was described as Blackfoot Territory. 648
This was not Royce Area 398, but is shown on De Smet's map made at 131
the treaty council. Neither the Blackfeet tribes, nor the Flathead 175
from west of the Rockies who might have disputed the assignment of
this land to the Blackfeet were parties to this treaty.

9. Throughout the early nineteenth century the Blackfeet B
tribes continued to hunt on both sides of the 49th parallel. It is 131
interesting to note that in the summer of 1853 Stanley found the 175
Piegan (southernmost of the Blackfeet tribes) hunting north of that

[p. 187]

B line. And when Doty went to bring them in to the 1855 treaty
131 council he also found them hunting in the British Possessions. At
-175 that time the Piegan and Blood tribes appear to have wintered in
the United States and hunted northward into the British Possessions
in summer. The reduced Small Robes were south of the Missouri.
B The North Blackfeet spent most of their time north of the 49th
[648] parallel and took little interest in American affairs. The four
chiefs who represented them at the treaty council must have represented a minority of their tribe, and hence by Indian standards
that tribe could not be considered to have made a treaty with the
United States. At that time the distinction between the North
Piegan (residing primarily north of the 49th parallel) and the
South Piegan (residing primarily south of that line) was already
G apparent to Doty. He also recognized that the Gros Ventre were
131 "not a portion of the Blackfoot nation." They resided to the east-
101 ward of the Piegan in the country bordering Milk River.
175

The treaty of 1855 designated more land for the Blackfeet
B tribes than they then occupied. It is very doubtful if they occu-
648 pied any of the common hunting ground (Royce Area 398) at that time
131 or in later years, or if they then occupied Royce Area 399 east of
175 the Judith River. At the same time it failed to recognize the right
of the Pend d'Oreille and Kutenai to hunt buffalo east of the Rockies
in Royce Areas 574 and 565, a right those tribes continued to exercise
after the treaty.

[p. 188]

The major objective of the treaty was the establishment B
of intertribal peace among the tribes hunting on the northwestern 648
plains. The articles dealing with intertribal peace, agreed to by 175
the chiefs, were nullified soon thereafter by their young warriors [721]
the Blood Indians starting against the Crow within 10 days of the
treaty signing.

10. During the period 1862-1877 the North Blackfeet, B
Blood and North Piegan tended to spend more and more of their time 131
north of the international boundary. This culminated in Treaty 648
No. 7 with the Canadian Government at Blackfoot Crossing in 1877, 175
at which all of these groups ceded their lands north of the 49th [657]
parallel to the crown, swore their allegiance to the Queen, and
accepted reservation lands in present Alberta. The South Piegan
did not participate in this treaty.

11. The Executive Order of 1873, as a result of which the G
land between the Musselshell and the Missouri and its western tribu- [648]
tary, Sun River, was ceded, was one in which the Gros Ventre had no [131]
interest based upon occupancy. It had been land formerly occupied [175]
by the Piegan, from which they had withdrawn northward some eight
years earlier.

12. At the time of the Act of April 15, 1874, which G
moved the southern boundary of the reservation northward to Birch [648]
Creek, none of the four tribes occupied the portion of the ceded [131]
area south of the Teton River. (See Royce Area 574.) But the South [175]
Piegan did occupy the portion of this area between the Teton River
and Birch Creek. These Indians are on record as having opposed the

B cession of this occupied portion, and their opposition was known
131 to officials in Washington before the order was issued. They are
● 648 also on record as having stated that they did not oppose the cession
175 of that portion of Royce Area 574 south of the Teton River, i.e. the
portion they did not then occupy.

13. Between 1874 and 1884 the South Piegan occupied that
B portion of Royce Area 565 from the Rockies to the neighborhood of
131 the Bearpaw Mountains over which they hunted buffalo. They were not
175 the exclusive occupants, however, because tribes living in Canada
came southward to hunt here also, and in increasing numbers after
G the buffalo disappeared north of the boundary in 1879. During this
131 period the small Gros Ventre tribe hunted in the portion of Royce
175 Area 565 between the Little Rockies and the Bearpaw Mountains. However they shared this area with the Upper Assiniboin, and, as buffalo
became scarce near the end of this period with Assiniboin, Cree and
other groups from Canada.

14. After the buffalo disappeared, both the South Piegan
B
G and Gros Ventre were compelled by the necessity of living primarily
657 upon Government rations, issued weekly at their Agencies, to settle
175 down within a few miles of their Agencies - the South Piegan on
131 Badger Creek and Birch Creek near the Blackfeet Agency, and the
648 Gros Ventre on Milk River near Fort Belknap Agency. As early as
1883 these tribes expressed their desire to Senator Vest and Delegate Maginnis to exchange their surplus lands for seeds, farming
equipment, etc. - the means with which to make a living on their
gameless land. This was the land occupied by these tribes at the

[p.190]

time of the 1888 Land Agreements. Although the South Piegan ac- B
cepted a reservation of their own, the Gros Ventre agreed to go G
upon a reservation with the Upper Assiniboin who had shared their 657
hunting ground and had participated in the Land Agreement with them. 175
In the case of the South Piegan no other tribe was involved in the 131
Land Agreement or placed upon the reservation with them. In their 648
case also the land occupied at the time of the cession was well
within the area of the Blackfeet Reservation. In the case of the
Gros Ventre it was necessary for them to move onto the Fort Belknap
Reservation, from their homes near the abandoned Fort Belknap Agency
farther up Milk River.

15. Between 1888 and the time the South Piegan negotiated B
their second Land Agreement in 1895, these Indians were issued cattle, 657
farming implements, etc., and they spread northward over the reserva- 648
tion to establish homes in the river valleys. However, they did not 311
establish homes in the mountainous area of the reservation which was 361
the portion ceded. They made use of that portion of their reserva- 175
tion for hunting, fishing and obtaining timber. Under the terms of
the Agreement they reserved their hunting, fishing and timber rights
in the ceded area.

[p.191]

CHAPTER ONE

Treaty and the Early Reserve

WITH the cession in 1870 of the Hudson Bay Territory, comprising 175 most of northern and western Canada, to the newly formed Dominion 439 of Canada, the great era of the fur trade ended. For several decades supplies of ermine and beaver had been diminishing, while [648] the bulky and coarse buffalo hides had always been much less profitable. Yankee fur traders, their wagons loaded with whiskey, had swarmed northward to undercut the monopoly of the Hudson's Bay Company. Without civil or military force, the factors were helpless to defend their chartered rights against these intruders. Moreover, the ploughing of the wilderness had begun to drive the silver fox, beaver, and mink to remoter refuge. Settlers were slowly penetrating western Ontario and Manitoba. The Hudson's Bay Company was preparing to nail fast the shutters of its trading posts and open up land offices. It was setting up a new kind of post where perfume, cigars, kettles, and tea-pots replaced kegs of rum, twist tobacco, powder, and bullets.

To supplant this fur empire, the fathers of the new regime envisaged 175 a flourishing land. Unlike India and other imperial possessions, 648 Canada would resemble the home lands: tiny farming hamlets with churches, schools, stores, and foundries were to be scattered across the continent; there would be a railway, and cities of wealth, all under the protection of the "Good Queen Mother."

But at the moment of signing the documents in Ottawa, there still lay miles of wilderness without trail. On the plains the buffalo 175 made their seasonal migration, followed by hundreds of Indian tipis. The Indians had fitted their lives to the buffalo; they ate its flesh, 105 were sheltered by its hide, made tools from its bones, traded its fur for guns and ammunition, and derived spiritual satisfaction from its power. Moreover, they were proud, pugnacious peoples with well-developed techniques of warfare.

16: Hanks & Hanks E,P-4,5 (1938-1941) 1950
NF6 Blackfoot NF6
Northern Blackfoot
Blackfoot Reserve

175 To transform the land from wilderness to civilization required two immediate steps. The first was to bring about "order." Signed 648 and sealed documents stating business and intent afforded no protection to the whites. Marauding Indians, avid for horses, were ruthless of life and property. To befriend one tribe of Indians exposed a man *ipso facto* to attacks by their traditional enemies. Nor were the Indians the only threat: desperadoes from all parts of the continent had sought refuge from the law by coming west. No place was safe from robbery and assault.

A handful of men, the Northwest Mounted Police, was entrusted with bringing order into the entire Northwest Territories. In 1874 the Police established their headquarters at Fort McLeod near the southern border. This was a strategic location for their key task: 175 stopping the Yankee whiskey trade. The traders sought horses and 439 furs, and for the whiskey they brought an Indian would give practically every horse, hide, or pelt he owned. The Mounties were not so much concerned with the fact that the Indians were usually 175 cheated in this trade, nor that liquor so demoralized them that 648 bloodthirsty internal quarrels broke out; but they did discover that any group, finding itself drained of horses, the *sine qua non* of the 721 buffalo hunt, immediately went on a horse raid against whites or [439] Indians to replenish its supply. Thus the whiskey trade was a direct fomenter of disorder. Of course, the Mounties did not realize then that economic necessity was only one factor producing warfare. They seem not to have known of the prestige value in reciting *coups* and in building up a large herd of horses, both prerequisites to chieftainship. 175 Nevertheless, they sought to bring peace among the tribes by driving out the whiskey traders. They closed Fort Hamilton and 648 Fort Whoop-up, packing the traders back to Fort Benton. They tried to protect the isolated settler of the prairies. They sought to gain goodwill by feeding the curious natives who came to inspect the white man's *ménage*. In such ways they hoped to bring order to the west.

The second necessary step was abrogation of the claim of the Indian inhabitants to all this land and the formal establishment of white sovereignty. Despite popular views of settlers that Indians had no rights to land because they failed to utilize the agricultural resources, British practice had long assumed certain rights of the aboriginal occupants to their residential and hunting lands. Arbi-

trary dispossession of a native population was morally offensive, 175
and, seeking to avoid the type of conflict that perennially occurred
in the United States, the Canadian government formally distinguished 648
Indian land from land designated for white settlement.
The device worked well except for mixed bloods whose claims had
no legal support. Hence arose the first Riel Rebellion. In the early [721]
seventies treaties were negotiated in Manitoba and the Northwest
Territories. By 1877 whites were ready to enter Alberta. It was
the Blackfoot's turn.

The Blackfoot Treaty

Numerous tribes occupied the northern plains from the Red 101
River of Minnesota and Manitoba to the Rocky Mountains. On its
western edge was the Blackfoot confederation which moved in an 131
area from the foot-hills of the Rockies eastward to the Cypress Hills,
from the Saskatchewan River to the Missouri. To the north were
Plains Cree; to the east, the Assiniboin, while southward lived the
Crow. Though its lands were not considered "property," each tribe
recognized trespass and would kill a stranger at sight. This was with
good reason, for no one ventured outside his territory except to steal
horses or go to war.

The Blackfoot confederation comprised three main tribes: they 101
were the Siksika, or Blackfoot proper, with which this paper deals
specifically; the Blood; the North and the South Piegan. All spoke
the same Algonquin language with minor variations and lived for
many decades in friendship. Some time in the past the Sarsi, an 648
Athabascan-speaking people who had come down from the north,
were befriended as a weaker group and allowed to settle in this same
region. From time to time the Gros Ventre, or Atsina, were on
peaceful terms with the confederation, and they were granted freedom
of movement within Blackfoot territory. All these people,
about ten thousand, moved to and fro through the high rolling plains
with considerable harmony, occupying at some time during the year
almost every part of their land.

How did the coming of the whites influence the life of the Blackfoot? 175
In the seventeen hundreds, Anthony Hendry and David 177
Thompson, prospectors for the fur companies, had visited Blackfoot
camps and recorded in their journals various events they had wit-

175 nessed.[1] In the early part of the nineteenth century, when Fort
177 Edmonton and Rocky Mountain House were built as trading posts,
many changes occurred. Iron blades were substituted for stone.
Guns replaced to a large extent the bow and arrow. Woollen blankets
and red woollen cloth became parts of Indian costume. Coloured
beads frequently supplanted dyed porcupine quills. In order to gain
these new possessions, the Blackfoot began to kill buffalo at a greater
rate. To their subsistence needs was added the exchange motive
[164] with its waste of key resources. A more sinister influence of the
whites upon tribal social life was disease; periodic epidemics visited
the Blackfoot and left the smokeless tipis of entire bands in camp
175 formation to disintegrate on the prairie. Liquor was a powerful disrupter.
177 Father Scollen, an Oblate missionary, wrote in 1876 a letter
from Fort Pitt to the Governor of Manitoba describing the scene
276 as he had observed it: ". . . hundreds of poor Indians fell victims
to the white man's craving for money, some poisoned, some frozen
to death while in a state of intoxication and many shot down by
United States bullets."[2] The Blackfoot herds diminished, and murderous
175 drunken brawls were frequent. These, however, were superficial
177 changes. When sober, the survivors of a drinking party went
again on the warpath. Buffalo were still the main means of subsistence,
and each year the circle of the Sun Dance camp was formed
when the saskatoons were ripe in the thickets along the river.

175 The first whites scarcely attempted to alter the lives of the
Indians. Most of them were traders, and as long as good profits
648 came in, they did not disturb the source of their golden eggs. Indeed,
it was considered especially dangerous for Americans to enter Blackfoot
territory. Lewis and Clark were advised to cross the mountains
to the south in order to avoid encountering Piegan war parties.[3]
The Jones and Immel expedition, sent out by the Missouri Fur
Company, was slaughtered in 1823, probably by Piegan warriors.[4]
Many an early fort on the Missouri River was burned and its inhabitants
175 massacred. The black-robes were in equal danger: Father

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797 [1] *York Factory to the Blackfoot Country, the Journal of Anthony Hendry, 1754-55*, ed. by Lawrence Burpee (*Proceedings and Transactions of the Royal Society of Canada*, 1907, 3rd Series, vol. I, sec. 2). *New Light on the Early History of the Greater Northwest. The Manuscript Journals of Alexander Henry and David Thompson, 1799-1814*, ed. by Elliott Coues (New York, 1897).

[2] Alexander Begg, *History of the Northwest* (Toronto, Hunter Rose, 1894), vol. II, p. 128.

[3] Reuben Gold Thwaites, *Original Journals of the Lewis and Clark Expedition* (New York, Dodd, Mead, 1905), vol. V, p. 206.

[4] H. M. Chittenden, *The American Fur Trade of the Far West* (New York, Francis P. Harper, 1902), vol. I, p. 330.

de Smet had to abandon St. Mary's mission in Montana in 1850.[1] Only in the sixties and seventies could such men as Father Lacombe 175 and Father Scollen[2] undertake prolonged social relations with the 797 Blackfoot. Though they attempted to participate in the affairs of these people, they could do little more than talk with them and pray for the dying. Through their influence an uncertain peace was con- 175 cluded between the Plain Crees and the Blackfoot, during which the young men merely turned elsewhere for booty. 648 These "peace" interludes were always of short duration, frequently ending with a planned slaughter of Crees lured into camp for the purpose. Despite an 175 increasing number of white settlers, Indian life persisted in its old forms, and not until the coming of herders and agriculturists were 177 the beginnings of social upheaval clearly felt.

In the midst of such a life, with no observable necessity for 175 change, it may be asked why the Blackfoot agreed to sign a treaty which dispossessed them of their land and was to alter their lives 648 profoundly. Indeed, the signing of a treaty with Indians who permitted few whites to enter their territory and who had as late as 1870 planned a raid on Fort Edmonton was a mission that Governor Laird and Colonel J. F. McLeod did not accept lightly. Four factors may be seen: (1) the character of Chief Crowfoot; (2) his appreciation of white strength and his tendency to accede to white demands; (3) the conception of the treaty on the part of the Indians; (4) the pressures at the moment of signing.

Crowfoot was chief of the Moccasins band of the Blackfoot. At 175 twenty this wiry little man gave up the war party after a good but 622 not outstanding record of deeds in battle. He had galloped in the face of gun-fire to strike the tipi of the head chief of the Crow. In hand-to-hand combat he had wrested a gun from a Flat Head. He had built up through raids a sizable herd of horses. Some time during these years of fighting his knee was injured, which had made the long days of walking to enemy camps difficult, if not impossible. Hence, with a good record as a war chief, he settled down to the routine life of the camp. Then, having acquired a reputation for generosity, he assumed, in the regular Blackfoot pattern, the duties of chief and provider for his own band.

In 1865, Father Albert Lacombe first visited the Blackfoot camps 175 as a missionary and became acquainted with Crowfoot. During this 797

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[1] Tom Stout, ed., *Montana, Its Story and Biography* (Chicago, American Historical Society, 1921), p. 154.

[2] Katherine Hughes, *Father Lacombe, the Black-robed Voyager* (Montreal, Moffat, Gard, 1911), p. 107 ff.

inferior to Eagle Ribs' and despite being the junior of Old Sun, began 175
to dominate Blackfoot affairs. A peace lasting over two years was
concluded with the Crees. Horses captured from this tribe by 622
persons outside Crowfoot's band were ordered by Crowfoot to be [648]
returned, even though this assumption of authority defied all Blackfoot precedents. It was only when Crowfoot attempted to enforce [727]
this practice with those of equal status that his orders were sometimes ignored.

When the Mounted Police came, Crowfoot may have seen them 175
as brave men of action. It was impressive to see any man, red or
white, ride forth in the face of guns to take his man and return successfully. 648 Moreover, with Father Lacombe's talks in mind, Crowfoot could understand that the redcoats were not just self-seekers. Their intent was to restore peace to the land, for they dispersed the Yankee traders as well as the Indian raiding parties.

In these talks with Father Lacombe and later with Father Scollen we can be sure that Christian brotherhood was not the only thing mentioned. These whites knew in 1870 that the railway was coming and that the old Hudson's Bay Company was going. They must have told Crowfoot about the numerical strength of the white man in his cities to the east, and called to his attention the gradual western penetration of the whites. Even more serious was the news which local traders had frequently tried to convey, that the buffalo were disappearing. They may also have inferred that it was beyond the power of Indians to prevent these changes; the Mounties were but a taste of what was soon to come. In a show of force, as had been amply demonstrated south of the border, disorganized skirmishing was no defence against cavalry columns. Should it ever come to open warfare, the red man had little chance of survival.

Whatever prompted Crowfoot, he tended to favour whites in all his dealings. When Colonel McLeod or Governor Laird visited the Blackfoot, Crowfoot was in a better position than any other man to appreciate the strength and perceive the objective of the white man. He could see that the repeating rifle of a white outclassed the Indians' powder and ball musket. Because of his close association with Father Lacombe he could comprehend better these men who spoke of peace. To be sure all whites were not of that same fabric, for Crowfoot too had seen his friends shot at the forts and had himself been cheated by the profit-wise traders. But the white leaders like Father Lacombe and Colonel McLeod were above reproach.

Besides Crowfoot's own propensity to favour the whites, the [622]

175 648 622 whites themselves helped to elevate him to the status of head-chief. They thought every group of people had a titular political head, a social structure with some ultimate, responsible person to lead and coerce. They did not perceive that Blackfoot leadership consisted, not of one head-chief, but of a fluctuating number of chiefs of small autonomous bands. They demanded someone who could speak for the entire tribe. The Blackfoot accorded Crowfoot the rule of negotiator without complaint. A man of Crowfoot's experience in dealing with whites was, naturally, given the job automatically. So Crowfoot became a crucial figure for the first treaty, but the Blackfoot never considered him a leader authorized to make decisions on their behalf and responsible for tribal conduct.

175 648 On a September day in 1877, the entire Blackfoot confederacy, except the Southern Piegans who lived in the United States, plus the Stoney Indians from the mountains, assembled at Blackfoot Crossing on the Bow River, with Crowfoot as the negotiator for the Blackfoot. Father Scollen had arranged the meeting by personal visits to each of the chiefs of the assembled tribes. Tipis were packed for miles along the flat in such numbers that children who played through the camps were often unable to find their way home. On the other side of the river, traders offered their tempting goods. Even Governor Laird was impressed by the beauty of the setting, though the "ubiquitous" Indians with their mangy dogs and greasy equipment seemed to defile it.[1]

The significance of the terms of the treaty was probably never very clear to the Indians. Governor Laird's presentation address emphasized the wishes of the "Good Queen Mother" for peace among her children and dwelt on the benefits of rations and the yearly annuity.[2] Each tribe was to have a certain territory of its own, though the Indians would be free to hunt buffalo on the lands they ceded as long as they obeyed Her Majesty's laws. All terms were carefully read to the chiefs, and their questions sagaciously answered. Yet it is doubtful whether M. L'Hereux, the interpreter, could meaningfully translate the concepts of Governor Laird to the
[425] chiefs or of the chiefs to Governor Laird. In the first place, disposal
[423] of land was completely foreign to the Blackfoot. Though horses and
tipis could be sold, land was not property in the same sense. More-

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[1] A. O. MacRae, *History of the Province of Alberta* ([Calgary?], The Western Canada History Co., 1912), p. 345.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 351.

over, Governor Laird was greeted by the chiefs with flowery speeches of welcome which, as printed in eastern newspapers, do not sound like the terse forthrightness of most Blackfoot speeches. The known doubts that were in the minds of many, as told sixty years later by their sons and grandsons, fully bespeak a lack of understanding of what "ceding" meant.

The Blackfoot seem to have grasped at least four aspects of the treaty. They knew that signing meant giving up warfare against the Crees and other Canadian Indians. That was acceptable if reciprocated. If they understood that they were to "give up" the land, they also thought that they would be permitted to continue hunting on it indefinitely. This was all they had ever used the land for. They knew that for this concession the whites would give each chief a large silver medal, a Winchester rifle, a blue uniform, and a sum of money; that each member of the tribe would receive a somewhat smaller sum of money and, for some reason, at a later date, cattle and farming tools. They knew that this money would come each year to them, and that as soon as they received it, the blankets, tea, guns, and powder of the traders would be available to them.

Certainly the tribe did not know that "surrender and yield up to the Government of Canada, to her Majesty the Queen and her successors all their rights, titles and privileges"[1] would mean giving all these buffalo lands to white settlers and settling in perpetuity on a certain designated spot. It was beyond their remotest dream that they should give up the Indian life and become farmers and herders like the whites. They expected rather that life would continue in much the same way with the added benefits of sums of money coming to them every year. During the summer they would continue to range with the buffalo over vast areas, and in winter they could return to this friendly spot for money to buy goods from the traders. The offer of cattle and farm implements did not have much reality, for of what possible use could these be to the Blackfoot?

Perhaps some of the chiefs were more sagacious than their followers. Some may have heard the old eccentric, Many Stars, who said he had prophetic power. For several years in the camps and now even during actual treaty signing he had been shouting: "Have your good time now! Times are changing. Buffalo will soon leave. They will be shown to you only by the white men; you will not meet

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[1] Treaty No. 7, *The Blackfoot Treaty*, copy in MacRae, *op. cit.*

175 them. There will be no hearth stones to mark where you have 648 camped. People will live on the river bottom. You will make a living from earth, sell grass, sell rocks, sell trees to get things to eat. The only buckskin will be your moccasins." Indeed, something comparable to Many Stars' vision had been heard also by Indians who visited the trading post in Calgary a few years before treaty. There a half-breed employee had said: ". . . The Mounties have come. All you Indians, all the chiefs haven't tried to resist those Mounties and send them back east. They are going to give you a piece of blue-backed paper. That is a dollar, and means there won't be any more buffalo. It will be the end of all the game you eat. They [the buffalo] may be chased south, west or east." Most people were incredulous, but possibly Crowfoot in his deliberations suspected that these words might come true; certainly they reminded him of Father Lacombe's stories.

At any rate, the responsibility for the initial decision rested clearly on Crowfoot's shoulders. This decision would set the course for many others. Old Sun was approached by the whites to urge him to influence Crowfoot's decision, but the old man sent them away, saying he waited for Crowfoot to speak. In the council of the chiefs Crowfoot kept silent. He may have had a glimmering of what signing the treaty meant, but the council itself was divided on the difficult and confusing issue. Eagle Calf, chief of another Blackfoot band, dazzled by the offer of blue-backs, was in favour of signing. Other chiefs, like Running Rabbit, Eagle Ribs, and Calf Robe, refused to influence him. They would follow his decision whatever it was, for they had given him the unprecedented authority to deal with the whites. Little Person, Bear Child, Old Sun, and Calf Child were probably opposed to the new move, but they too waited for Crowfoot.

The attitudes of the followers of these chiefs was an important limitation on their authority, for an unpopular move might cost a chief a portion of his band. The people by and large seem to have been influenced by immediate considerations rather than the remoter consequences of signing treaty. Many were avid for axes or yard-goods and would have left immediately the camp of a chief who denied them these treasures. That none of the dissident chiefs made overt moves to remain outside of treaty is perhaps evidence of a popular will to sign.

The pressure on Crowfoot was terrific. Whatever else he understood about the treaty, he seemed to sense that signing it meant subjugation to the whites and an end to the wars that had made 175 the Blackfoot respected on the plains. Could the war stipulation be enforced even in his own band? This was humiliation such as he 648 had not envisaged as concomitant with "white dealing." Yet he may have recalled the hints of the black-robes that the might of the whites could only temporarily be stayed, that a change in the old life was inevitable. Possibly, had there been tangible support from his friends to resist the whites, he might have refused the treaty. Button Chief of the Bloods seemed to be the only one who asked for more money, and he had been made a laughing-stock by Governor Laird. The Stoneys were all willing. The agonized Crowfoot was left alone in his tipi to make the decision.

At last Crowfoot finished his deliberations and gave consent to sign the treaty. One of the few Indians to realize even in part its implications for the Blackfoot way of life, filled with consternation and sorrow, he moved his tipi from the camp, but shortly thereafter was urged to return for the hollow honours. As he made his mark on the document before the assembled dignitaries, cannon roared from the top of the hill; bagpipes played; the Union Jack was hoisted; and later the people with their crisp blue-backs flocked eagerly to fill the coffers of the traders. Laird and McLeod had won an easy victory. They listened to Crowfoot's acceptance speech which in edited form was published by the newspapers of the East. One part, however, was not included, a part that was reported in the versions of many of our informants. Perhaps this is a subsequent embellishment that has gained currency among the Blackfoot. Perhaps it actually occurred, and its omission was owing to the incompetence of the interpreter or the blue pencil of the editor, for whom it was meaningless. Standing to speak, Crowfoot is said to have plucked from his eagle-wing fan a downy feather and given it to Governor Laird. Then he said, "Keep us like this feather forever, keep us like a pampered child (*mɩni'.puka*)."[1] In these words Crowfoot spoke his feelings. He expected kind treatment by the whites, but he also foresaw the days when the young men, no longer tempered by the warpath, would be as soft and malleable before these whites as the downy wing feathers of an eagle. He hoped they would take pity.

That all did not agree with Crowfoot's decision is reflected in Crowfoot's choice of men to receive the medals. Eagle Ribs, even

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[1] Cf. p. 88.

175 though he signed the treaty, refused to obligate himself to the whites,
648 by accepting a medal. Little Person, Eagle Robe, Chief Calf, all
respected men and chiefs, were excluded or refused to be honoured
in this manner. They knew they were chiefs even without a medal
and a gold-braided uniform. But the whites were very well satisfied
with their accomplishment; they had subdued the most war-like
tribe of the northern plains. They were oblivious of the internal
complications that were shortly to arise because of the selection of
chiefs.

Post-Treaty Movements

648 The Blackfoot, after this brief interruption of their usual movements,
immediately moved off in search of buffalo and against tribes
721 south of the boundary from whom they could steal without breaking
the newly signed treaty. For the first year after treaty Blackfoot
life changed no more than the ego of an infant changes after christening.
In his own band Crowfoot forbade raiding parties against
the Crees, though other chiefs who lacked his feeling of responsibility
657 permitted their young men to go out. Back at Blackfoot
Crossing and Fort McLeod on the first anniversary of the payment,
the Indians were disconcerted at receiving a smaller payment than
before, but with a show of firmness, dignified by a knowledge of the
terms of the treaty, Colonel McLeod was able to settle this question.
The Indians solved the problem, too, for they discovered that by
changing from a Hudson's Bay blanket to a buffalo robe and by
using another name they could get as much if not more than formerly.
The cattle had not arrived for distribution. But as the
Indians did not wish to be encumbered by these stinking beasts,
Colonel McLeod was relieved of having to explain his failure to
carry out that part of the treaty.

[136] Things were moving according to plan. The end of the buffalo
had been predicted by the whites to occur towards the end of the
[224] eighties. During this time hunting would provide for the Indians.
In the meantime the Blackfoot would be gradually broken to the
rein by increasing police supervision to keep them on their reserve
and by giving them cattle and farm implements to provide them
with sustenance.

511 It was, then, a surprise to the whites, as well as to the Indians,
to see the tragic bands that straggled into Blackfoot Crossing and
[224] Fort McLeod in the summer of 1879. All winter they had searched

241 generosity was galling. When visitors from the North Piegan reserve,
where gardening had taken hold, came visiting with presents
177 for their poor Blackfoot relations, the latter could give nothing in
431 return. As additional inducement the farm instructors gave out
various labour-saving devices: a plough was substituted for the
241 spades; later oxen replaced the backs of men and the Indian ponies
177 for pulling the plough. Mowers could cut oats faster and more easily
than a scythe. A harvester separated seed from chaff more quickly
407 than the feet of men and women, faster even than the horses that
492 Eagle Ribs turned into the corral to tramp the grain. Every chief
knew that if he did not care for the needs of his followers as other
622 chiefs did for theirs, his followers would move away. Such failure
brought ignominy.

241 One by one the chiefs changed their minds, as the benefits of
gardening became more evident. In the ten years following settling
on the reserve in 1882, the area under cultivation increased from
169 acres to 311.[1] During these years each band was induced to
plant an area of oats and another of potatoes. Some rounded out
the crop with seeding of various roots. It was humiliating, arduous
labour, little to the people's liking, but seeing tangible rewards for
[433] their efforts, they went ahead with it. The produce fluctuated from
year to year, but several thousand bushels of potatoes were harvested
every year varying from 2,370 in 1883 to 14,838 in 1890.

177 This new economy on the reserve could not develop without
introducing many changes in the social structure. In the first place
there was a conflict between Indian ways and white ways. We have
noted this conflict in its relationship to gardening, where following
648 the Indian way served as a slogan to rally the disaffected. Its ramifications
entered also the realm of political control where trouble
622 arose from the very start.

177 On treaty-signing day in September, 1877, after fifteen or twenty
Northern Blackfoot chiefs had signed Treaty No. 7, Crowfoot called
forth about eight of them to receive the silver medals from the
government. The necessity of choosing the "top eight" from the
continuum of chiefs would be awkward for any Blackfoot. There
might be universal agreement on such figures as Crowfoot, Old Sun,
and Running Rabbit, but at the lower levels, where status could

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[127] [1] Unless otherwise specified, all statistics on reserve population, production, earnings, property, and school attendance are taken from the annual reports of the Department of Indian Affairs for the years cited. Each year these and other statistics are listed for all reserves in the Dominion.

only be determined by comparing deeds that were never exactly 648
equivalent, along with estimating relative generosity, wisdom,
wealth, etc., all matters of pride, trouble was sure to arise. In any 622
case there were many more signers to the treaty than receivers of 177
the silver medals and certainly more chiefs than signers. Failure to be recognized as a chief by receiving a medal after having signed the treaty was an affront to some, and many of these men whose high status had not been recognized were resentful. Others, as we have seen, though they may have been offered medals, refused, regarding them as tokens of submission to the whites. These two groups, the neglected and the rejecting chiefs, expressed a common antipathy by disdainfully dubbing the accepters of medals "white chiefs," and by openly proclaiming that wearing a medal in no way elevated status. Furthermore, the white administrators, sometimes unable to distinguish between a chief by Indian standards and a commoner, occasionally made the mistake of giving a commoner the official powers of a chief. For example, Laird at Fort Pitt in 1879 appointed a man chief and issued him the rations to be distributed to the Blackfoot camping there, even though this man lacked every Blackfoot qualification for the role. With white sanction he presumed to act as chief, when a qualified chief was already present. The Indians, famished at that time, did nothing to correct the situation, but on their return to the reserve in the spring this man was shunned and
ignored by all except his immediate family. Thus white contact and 177
intervention produced three conflicting kinds of chief: (1) those
recognized by both whites and Indians; (2) those recognized by 622
whites but not by Indians; (3) those recognized by Indians and not
by whites. There can be no question but that much of the failure [648]
of the Indians to co-operate with governmental regulations and orders occurred because the whites failed to deal with the key men in the tribe. Instead they made their own key men, who lacked the necessary authority to ensure co-operation.

To add to this confusion the administrators subdivided the chiefs whom they recognized into two head chiefs, in this case Crowfoot and Old Sun, and several minor chiefs. This distinction was unknown to the Blackfoot. Though certain chiefs were more influ- [631]
ential outside the circle of their immediate followers than others, no formal hierarchy of authority had ever existed. In practice there was no anarchy of decision because of this arrangement; rather a chief did what he felt was necessary and right, while the others with

177 622 [578] comparable problems usually did similarly. On matters of common interest they met, talked it over, and reached an agreement on common action, or at least learned each other's views. The whites' expectation, then, that executive power resided in the hands of one man produced additional friction.

648 622 578 An instance of this conflict may be seen when the Canadian Pacific Railway approached the Blackfoot to obtain right-of-way for their tracks between Medicine Hat and Calgary. The representatives of the railway evidently made their proposals directly to Crowfoot. By white standards the decision rested in his hands, though he might have sought the recommendation of the other chiefs. By Indian standards he had no power to act on behalf of the others on a problem that concerned them all, and should have obtained the approval of all before action was taken. What actually happened in the meeting between Crowfoot and the railway representatives may possibly be found in the archives of the railway company. It is certain, however, that Crowfoot did not bring the matter to the attention of the chiefs but acted on it himself. No Indian objected when the railway came through; it was perhaps viewed as another uncontrollable aspect of the treaty. In a public ceremony the railway company gave Crowfoot a medal which entitled him to unlimited transportation. After Crowfoot's death, however, a peculiarity appeared. A cheque for $70 came each month from the railway company to the head chief of the east end of the reserve, in this case to Three Bulls, the new chief and brother of Crowfoot. Not knowing its purpose, Three Bulls inquired and discovered that Crowfoot had been secretly accepting this sum since the granting of the right-of-way to the C.P.R. This sum should not be construed as a bribe, but as a perfectly above-board part of the agreement with the company. An event so widely publicized as Crowfoot's death could not have escaped the attention of the railway company, had they wished to discontinue the payment. It is our guess that Crowfoot was continuing his policy of pleasing the whites. Properly, he should have conferred with the chiefs but may have been afraid that they would reject the offer, or he may have been pressed by the agent and the railway representative to act for his people. In Blackfoot terms, nevertheless, he was clearly assuming unwarranted authority and had to accept the monthly payment secretly to prevent it being known that he had presumed to act for the others. His shame and fear in so doing is argued not only by

the secret being kept from his own brother and successor, but also 648
by the fact that subsequent head chiefs have uniformly rejected the
payment as tainted money. Furthermore, Crowfoot, though honoured 622
in other ways by his own people, has been roundly condemned 578
for this action because he did not consult the other chiefs.

Not only were minor and head chiefs occasionally at odds, but
they both conflicted with chiefs unrecognized by whites. This may 621
be one factor accounting for the multiplication of band groups 361
shortly after settling on the reserve. There was also no necessity to maintain large camps for reasons of self-defence, and Inspector Denny urged that the bands scatter over the reserve in order to provide more space for gardens. Furthermore, few chiefs had the means to support a very large group of followers in the old way. From the Unlucky Guns band there arose the Meat Eaters under Little Person, the Many Children under Eagle Calf, besides the original group that remained with Crow Eagle and Bear Child. Similarly, the Bakers of Bannock divided, some going to camp with Calf
Bull, others going to the protection of White Eagle. Though deaths [165]
were eventually responsible for many movements and changes, those which occurred at this time, mainly from tuberculosis, scrofula, and measles, did not alter the band grouping very much.

These were tricky years for the chiefs in handling their followers. 622
Their obligations to provide clothing and tools for their followers 511
continued, but the main sources of these commodities were the storekeepers. In dealing with them, the only assets were garden produce or horses. Most of the latter had been lost during the two years in the United States. Chiefs faced a dilemma. Some, like Hind Bull, tried hunting in the north for deer but had difficulty in holding
together their following because of the scarcity of game. Others, who 721
remained on the reserve and faced white notions of order, risked alienation of those who were still eager to follow the warpath. Order had to be kept even though the seasoned warriors taunted their young society enemies who had never gone to war. Smarting from this ridicule, young men secretly gathered at night in remote coulees and set off south. On their return with stolen horses they faced the prospect of arrest by the Mounted Police. Many a tense moment resulted when the police sought to round up an offender. The old would say, "We used to do things; we were not afraid of the Mounties. We were strong." As a result, lives on both sides were lost while a young Indian, standing alone on a hill-top, proved his courage by defying the police to bring him to justice.

000 defying the police to bring him to justice. Other forms of defiance 177 that showed courage according to Indian ideas were shooting cattle, stealing whiskey, and disobeying white injunctions to remain on the reserve.

648 Even more disconcerting for the whites than these minor forays was the second Riel uprising of 1885. The white population was outnumbered, especially if all the Indians of the Northwest were to unite. It did not know the country so well, and had less to lose by defeat. Panic seized the whites and volunteer brigades were organized in all towns for defence. When the Cree chief Poundmaker sent an emissary to Crowfoot asking for help, white officials held their breath. Rations were increased, and extra merchandise was distributed to pacify the Blackfoot. Father Lacombe was sent to exert his influence on Crowfoot. To the great relief of all concerned Crowfoot refused to co-operate with the Crees, saying, "This is your war. We have made peace with the whites." Wishing to benefit by Blackfoot loyalty, a few whites suggested inducing the Blackfoot to rekindle their latent hostility toward the Crees and join forces with the government. Though it would not have been difficult to enlist the services of many, the conservative white leaders, fearing that the Blackfoot might not stop fighting after having put down the insurgents, refused permission.

For the most part the rebellion passed the reserve quietly. 563 Parents used it as a pretext to withdraw their children from the newly-founded missionary school, and some chiefs showed their sympathetic generosity by caring for a little group of Cree women and children which had escaped from the battle zone in the north. Rested and comforted, many of the refugees went on to the United States, but some remained with the Blackfoot. A few with their descendants, even though always specified as Crees, live on the 648 reserve today, and have married Blackfoot. Crowfoot's trip in 1887 to Ottawa on the new railway was ordered by the government largely in appreciation of Blackfoot loyalty to the government during the Riel uprising. The well-phrased words that Father Lacombe translated to the velvet-coated officials convinced all that Her Majesty's munificence had not been wasted on an unappreciative savage.

517 Those who did not try the warpath as a means for showing their worth turned to a new kind of competition. With food issued weekly, and the old activities of hunting unnecessary or impossible, the 535 Indians found themselves with time on their hands. In former days 796 these were the occasions for dancing and celebration. Consequently,
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CHAPTER TWO

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The Sale of the Land

IN JUNE, 1910, a meeting was called of all members of the Blackfoot reserve to vote on surrendering a portion of the reserve. For 648 432 nearly two years the council of chiefs had been paving the way for this referendum, debating the terms of surrender. The area in question lay on the south side of the Bow River beyond an irrigation canal constructed a few years previously by the Canadian Pacific Irrigation Colonization Company. After many speeches the tribe's vote was taken. The majority agreed to relinquish nearly half of the reserve.

A. J. Markle, reporting the meeting in his annual statement as Inspector of Reserves for Alberta, summarized the terms of the agreement:

> During the month of June last the Indians surrendered about 125,000 acres of their reserve. This area has since been sub-divided and action taken to place it on the market for sale at public auction on the 14th of next month (June, 1911). The Indians agreed to the surrender referred to on the condition that $400,000 434 of the proceeds of the sale is to be expended for their use and benefit, and the remainder of the proceeds of sale is to be funded and the interest accruing thereon also to be expended for their benefit and for the advantage of their successors. The outcome of this deal will be, I think, that these Indians and their successors will soon have a sufficient income of their own to meet all their wants and that they will then be no longer any expense on the government outside of what was guaranteed to them by the treaty, i.e. a cash annual annuity of $5 per head.[1]

As stated by Markle, an auction was held in June, 1911, at which 432 60,771 acres of land were sold, realizing a total of $941,872.25 for the Blackfoot. This constitutes an average price of $15.50 per acre. [434] Only small bits of the unsold land were disposed of during the next few years, the largest sale being a few hundred acres as right-of-way for a new irrigation canal. Then in June, 1917, the remainder of the unsold land was again offered at auction. At this time 55,327 acres [424]

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[1] Dept. of Indian Affairs, *Annual Report*, 1911, p. 187.

432 were sold, realizing $1,276,190.92 or roughly $23 per acre. The re-
434 maining odd pieces of surrendered land were rented or leased to
expand still further the Blackfoot trust fund. The management of
657 these funds was assumed by the Department of Indian Affairs,
annual sums, representing interest on the capital, being sent to the
agent for maintenance and improvement of the reserve.

432 Several factors can be traced leading to this decision to sell the land. Among them are: (1) the land policy of the Department of Indian Affairs; (2) white settlement under the Canadian Pacific Railway's land development scheme; (3) the personality and activities of Markle, Indian Inspector for Southern Alberta; (4) the reserve conditions leading to the Indians' approval of the surrender.

648 Surrender and sale of land on Indian reserves was not a new thing for the Department of Indian Affairs. In all treaties of recent date the Indians had agreed to abide by Her Majesty's laws, which, of course, included future as well as existing laws. The specific laws governing Indians were not issues at the signing of most treaties, but all soon heard of the Indian Act. In this collection of statutes governing the treatment of Indians, provision for the surrender of Indian lands was made in Section 51, where surrender occurs by the consent of a majority of the adult males living on a reserve. Every annual report of the Department mentions the sale of some Indian land, from a few hundred acres to several thousand. For example, James A. Smart, Deputy Superintendent of Indian Affairs, reported in 1897 the sale of 14,541 acres of land from various Canadian reserves, realizing roughly 87 cents an acre. Where land was valuable, for instance, adjoining a sizable village, or with mineral resources, the Department encouraged Indian inhabitants to part with it and move to new reserves. Despite continuous sale of these land fragments, it was scarcely an avowed policy to liquidate reserves, as was the practice at this time in the United States. It was rather a minor friendly accommodation to white settlers. There was no aim of bettering the status of the Indian population from the receipts of the sales. Usually the sums were too trifling to be of any great benefit, and they were divided among the tribe or invested in some permanent manner such as a school.

With growing white population in the West there was a corresponding increase in pressure to acquire reserve lands, so that in 1908, for example, 40,163 acres were surrendered, realizing a total of $167,776.88 or roughly an average of $4.18 per acre. Such increased returns from sales of land raised new problems for the Department of Internal Affairs; according to the Indian Act it could not dissipate the proceeds when the sums were over $2,000 but must keep them in trust. Accordingly, Frank Pedley, Deputy Superintendent of Indian Affairs, announced in 1908 a new policy to be followed by the Department.

> The large influx of settlement of recent years into the younger provinces has dictated a certain modification of the department's policy with relation to the sale of Indians' lands.
>
> So long as no particular harm nor inconvenience accrued from the Indians' holding vacant lands out of proportion to their requirements, and no profitable disposition thereof was possible, the department firmly opposed any attempt to induce the[illegible]o divest themselves of any part of their reserves.
>
> Conditions, however, have changed, and it is now recognized that where Indians are holding tracts of farming or timber lands beyond their possible requirements and by so doing seriously impeding the growth of settlement, and there is such a demand as to ensure profitable sale, the product of which can be invested for the benefit of the Indians and relieve pro tanto the country of the burden of their maintenance, it is in the best interest of all concerned to encourage such sales.[1]

In order then to reduce the cost of maintenance of the Indians the Department specifically recognized the policy of selling land for their support.

Since colonial days the Department had acted as agent for the tribes' various financial enterprises, e.g., collecting rents, issuing patents, leasing mineral or timber rights, etc. Every tribe therefore had certain funds held to its credit. With small sums on deposit, the interest made possible only minor payments such as to the caretaker of the school, to chiefs, and to white physicians. These banking facilities were quite capable of handling the larger sums that were to come.

Pressure of the white population resulting from the Canadian Pacific Railway's irrigation project was a second factor in the decision to sell the land. In 1880 twenty-five million acres of land were granted to the Dominion government to this company as a portion of the contract for the construction of a transcontinental line. This land was to be selected by the C.P.R. from alternate sections along the road-bed, and was to be of "fair average quality." All but about three million acres of this grant had been made by 1903. In that year the railway agreed to accept a solid block of 2,900,000 acres

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[1] Dept. of Indian Affairs, *Annual Report*, 1908, p. xxxv.

648 lying in the arid region between Calgary and Medicine Hat in southern Alberta. This area had, in an early survey by Hind and Palliser, been condemned as unfit for agriculture.[1] Nevertheless the railway, seeking a thickly populated region for maximum receipts, accepted this tract with the expectation of irrigating the land from the Bow River. The area was roughly 180 miles from east to west and 50 miles from north to south along the main line of the railway. Shortly after acceptance the land was surveyed, ditches were constructed, "ready-made" farms were built with houses, barns and sheds, even crops were sown, and cheap fares to the West were ordered. Soon the countryside was swarming with new-comers.

Right in the centre of the tract ceded by the Dominion government lay at least one area which could not be taken over by the Canadian Pacific. This was the Blackfoot reserve. It had many desirable characteristics in the eyes of the whites. Since it straddled the Bow River, few additional canals had to be made to bring in water. The quality of the land, with the exception of a few sandy patches, was equal to any in the vicinity. The railway itself constituted a portion of the northern boundary, so that the main artery of transportation was easily accessible. This area, all in all, warranted higher prices. It is not surprising that such land was coveted. When in addition there was a press of homeseekers, excellent prices for wheat, speculators avid for profit, and above all, in the whites' opinion, "shiftless" Indians occupying and "misusing" fine land, all these factors converged as political pressure upon the Department of Indian Affairs, making it difficult for an official even with sympathetic and paternal attitudes toward the Blackfoot to refuse to admit the desirability of their surrendering a portion of the reserve.

657 A third contributing factor seems to have been the attitudes and personality of one man, who more than any other single person seemed to be involved in implementing the sale of the land. In 1901, Markle was made Indian agent on the Blackfoot reserve. Since 1885 he had been in the service of the Department as Indian agent. The Indian commissioner had been dissatisfied with the progress on the Blackfoot reserve and sought an energetic, resolute person. To fill this need, Markle came to the Blackfoot directly from the Birtle agency in Manitoba. Birtle consisted of a number of small, isolated reservations chiefly populated by Sioux and Salteaux. The short growing season, punctuated by frequent hail and frost, made living

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[1] James B. Hedges, *Building the Canadian West* (New York, Macmillan, 1939), p. 4.

16: Hanks & Hanks E,P-4,5 (1938-1941) 1950
NF6 Blackfoot NF6
Northern Blackfoot
Blackfoot Reserve

1648

F. Gully, Calgary

THE ROYAL VISITORS MEET THE BLACKFOOT IN 1939

[p. 112-G]

ones. If, besides, he showed such other attributes of leadership as 622
competence in economic planning, and ability to maintain reason-
able order, and was not in these aspects excelled by another within
his group, such an individual would gradually acquire a following
which regarded him as their band chief. This involved no formal
decision by the group, merely the building and maintaining of status
as chief through generosity, courage, and wisdom. Large bands had
two or more chiefs, each with a group of more or less constant fol-
lowers. Blackfoot theory stated that any person might camp with 621
any chief. In practice, each group comprised a stable core of close
relatives of the chief, his brother, sister's husband, son-in-law, and
often his son. In addition there was a circle of less immediate rela- 621
tives by blood or marriage, such as son's father-in-law, brother's 602
wife's sister's husband, and any member's cherished age-mate of no
traceable relationship. On this level, a man or his wife was almost
always related somehow to several chiefs. A person exploited his
kin relationships to his own advantage, and if ever the authority of
his chief became obnoxious or he saw better advantage elsewhere,
he moved away to assume membership among another chief's fol-
lowing. There appears to have been a number of families who
changed band affiliation from time to time. Thus chiefly jurisdiction 622
was over voluntary followers who had the right to move away from
burdensome authority whenever they wished. When the entire tribe
assembled, the chiefs watched over their respective followings, yet 619
constituted an informal council for matters affecting their collective 622
existence. As the relative prestige of the men in the council of band
chiefs and their areas of jurisdiction were well known to all, conflict
over authority seldom arose.

We have noted the particular difficulties at the signing of the 648
Blackfoot Treaty. At that time the Dominion government expected
or hoped that all the important chiefs of the tribe would sign, and 622
had prepared big silver medals to be issued to each one. However,
a number of chiefs refused to subscribe to the treaty and never
received medals. Naturally, in Blackfoot eyes this in no way dim-
inished their chiefly status and actually may have enhanced it
somewhat. Some of the minor chiefs who signed and received medals
were catapulted by the whites into positions much more honorific
than they merited. Worst of all, when ordinary men were occas-
ionally designated as chiefs by white officials, there arose the oppro-
brious epithet, "white chief," in contrast to a "real chief" who had

648 622 achieved his position the Blackfoot way. Twenty years after treaty, in 1897, there were eleven bands and fourteen chiefs, of whom three were elected, six appointed by the agent, and five who had achieved rank in the classical manner.

621 361 In the first decades of reserve life, the people adapted themselves with as few changes as possible. The chief settled with his band around him on one of the flats along the Bow River. Except for periods of outside work, these villages of shacks and tipis were occupied throughout the year. Occasionally a chief led a small group into the northern bush country to hunt deer, but these hunts were not entirely necessary for food because beef was issued weekly. Rather, people wanted hides for moccasins or weasel-tail coats, or perhaps they were merely restless, finding it irksome always to remain in the same place.

622 433 571 Though deprived of his function as director on the march and partly superseded as arbiter by the agent, the chief still controlled much of the economic destiny of the band. He was more than ever a distributor of necessities, dispensing not only food among the needy members of his band, but also tobacco, blankets, clothing, and materials for building shacks. All his possessions were at the disposal of the band. As in the famine days just after treaty, a good chief would share his food and supplies with the members of his band down to the last bag of pemmican. If a man wanted a team of horses or a wagon with a hay rack, usually the chief was the man to see, for the chief owned the implements. In return the chief would receive a portion of the man's earnings in money, labour, or kind. When a neighbouring white rancher needed help at roundup, haying, or harvest time, he approached the band chief. Were the conditions satisfactory, a group of band members was instructed to move near the rancher and perform the required tasks. After the work was completed, the chief was paid, and he distributed part of the pay to his men. Moreover, most band villages had gardens at one time, where potatoes and turnips were grown. At planting time and when cultivation was necessary, the chief called out the young men of the band. In return, the garden produce was dispensed among the hungry during the winter.

622 It was still possible for young men to attach themselves to the house of a chief in the role of a "hired man," to aid the chief by caring for his horses, gathering those strayed out on the range, procuring provisions from the store, and running sundry errands on business of the chief. In return these men were treated by the chiefly

721 neck of a buffalo hide. Heavy wooden lances were also used
[411] extensively by some tribes in horse days and may have been
[177] copied from Spanish models. Plains warfare but rarely involved pitched battles, or, indeed, save where specific motives
for revenge existed, the serious reduction of the enemy's
strength. Horses, not killing, were the reasons for going 'on
the war-path'. A small party set out on foot to the enemy's
territory, taking only their weapons, sleeping robes and a small
store of dried meat. If possible they crept up to an enemy
camp, cut loose the horses and drove them off. Conflict
721 followed only if they were discovered or pursued. Among the
555 Blackfoot the capture of an enemy's weapons ranked highest
as a deed. Among some other tribes, where the counting of
[171] coups was more formally elaborated, the touching of an enemy
ranked first, with the capture of weapons and horses as subsidiary deeds. Coups could, among some tribes like the Cheyenne,
be counted by several persons on a single enemy, and they
ranked in strict order of touching, irrespective of who actually
[532] wounded or killed him. These deeds, recorded in picture
writing on tipi walls and buffalo robes, constituted a sort of
heraldry. Whenever a man was called upon to play a part in
a social or ceremonial function he first recounted his deeds.

648 Alternating periods of friendship and strife were the relations
of the Blackfoot to other tribes, but, like other Plains tribes,
721 the Blackfoot had traditional enemies like the Cree, Assiniboine
and Crow, and also allies, such as the Sarcee and less permanently the Gros Ventre, against whom the elders forbade the
[201] young warriors to raid. The frequent contact of tribe with
tribe, whether in war or peace, was facilitated by the development of elaborate gesture symbols, or 'sign language', which
was uniform over wide areas, irrespective of the fundamental
differences in speech.

554 Rank among the Blackfoot depended not only on military 'Medicines'
778 prowess but also on the possession of 'medicines', that is, of
rituals, and the objects necessary for their performance, which
would ensure the success of some project or desire, be it health,
a journey, a raid, a hunt or another ceremony. The 'medicines'
[422] were owned by individuals and transferred from one to another
[432] for payments. These were, however, not primarily commercial
transactions, but their full consideration cannot be undertaken
here. The ritual apparatus was usually wrapped in bundles of
554 otter or some other valued skin. While most older men possessed some medicine the owners of the 'medicine pipe bundles'
were the senior and most entitled to respect. On the rank of
their medicine depended the place at a feast, the order of speech

701 462 with me on five raids. Some of them I led, and my wife was not required to perform the cooking or other chores. She carried a six-shooter. On one occasion she stole a horse with a saddle, ammunition bag, and war club." Those were considered noteworthy exploits even among the men.

Weasel Tail's war adventures are still recounted by some of the old people today. In addition, an anthropologist spent time with him in his last years and recorded the details of his life. Unfortunately, no one asked his wife to leave her stories about the war trails that she went on, since she was the last of our women who had experiences of this kind.

726 One of the first war parties that Weasel Tail and Hate Woman joined together was made up of more than twenty members. They left the Blood camps and headed east, in search of Sitting Bull's Sioux, who were then exiled in 648 Canada, after their victory over Custer. Although Sitting Bull has become a famous hero for many, he was not particularly liked or trusted by my people of the time. His presence in the country made life uncomfortable for all sides, and his warriors continually raided the neighboring tribes.

726 The leader of this war party was Eagle Child, who wasn't too thrilled about bringing a woman along. He kept her busy 701 cutting meat and performing other work for the rest of his 462 party. Another member of the party was one of her younger brothers, an uncle of my father's who was known then as Eagle Fly. When they got near the enemy camps this brother feared for the safety of his sister and tried to talk Weasel Tail into taking her back home. Finally they came in sight of one of the Sioux camps, at which point the leader and the woman's brother insisted that she wait for the rest by a grove of trees. Weasel Tail was left to wait with her.

The night went by and in the early morning Weasel Tail saw the Sioux turn their horses out of a corral in the camp. The hidden Blood warriors immediately roped some of the horses, mounted them, and drove the rest of the herd away.

20: Hungry Wolf I-4,5 (no date) 1980
NF6 Blackfoot NF6
Blood

In the excitement they forgot all about Weasel Tail and his 726
wife.

Weasel Tail had no choice but to go to one of the other 701
nearby camps and try to steal horses that they could ride 462
home. He got one and brought it to his wife. He told her to mount it and wait, while he went back for another. He soon found a good one, with a feather tied in its mane and another in its tail. When he got it roped and mounted he saw another fine-looking horse nearby, so he caught it, too. He rode back to his wife and together they made their getaway. In their excitement they left behind a little bundle containing dried meat and a good knife. Fortunately there was dried meat left at one of the campsites that they had stayed in with the main party, some days before. It took them less than four days to get back home.

Probably the most exciting adventure that Weasel Tail and Hate Woman took part in got them involved with three different enemy tribes. To begin with, they joined a Blood war party heading for the Crows, with whom Weasel Tail had lived as a youngster. He knew the country well, and the group had no problem stealing a large number of Crow horses. However, on their way back home with them they encountered a war party of Crees that greatly outnumbered them. There was a fight, during which one of the Crees was shot. While the Bloods sought shelter, the rest of the Crees left, taking along all their recently captured horses.

On foot, Weasel Tail, Hate Woman, and their party headed 648
north to find a camp of friendly Gros Ventres. By mistake 701
they walked into a camp of very unfriendly Assiniboines.
Luckily, the first person that they met in the camp was a 462
Blood named Sliding Down, who had married an Assiniboine woman and joined her tribe. He offered to bring them to the lodge of the chief and to interpret for them. When they got inside they found the chief not very willing to accept them as friends, while the rest of the camp's people hurriedly gathered

648 outside and surrounded the lodge. The Bloods knew that they
701 were in for trouble. An argument finally erupted, causing all
the Bloods to jump up and aim their guns at the chief. Hate
462 Woman was carrying her six-shooter, which she aimed along
with the rest. Then Weasel Tail gave out a mighty roar, to
impress the people with his power.

Sliding Down called out to the people, in their own language, that Weasel Tail was a ferocious man who had killed many people with his power, which came from the Grizzly. The people became afraid and rushed away to seek shelter, giving Weasel Tail's party a chance to escape.

726 After this the party split up, Weasel Tail, Hate Woman,
and one other man heading south to try again for Crow
701 horses. On the way they encountered a lone enemy—a Crow
462 man—whom they thought about killing and scalping. But
when he came close they saw that he looked very pitiful and
they knew that he was mourning. It turned out he had lost
his wife and didn't care if he lived or died, so Weasel Tail
made a prayer to Sun, asking for future pity for himself, and
he let the man go. He and his wife met the same man again,
in 1926, during an Indian celebration.

The three made their way back to the Crow country and
managed to steal fourteen good horses, with which they re-
796 turned to their own camps safely. Hate Woman was asked
555 to recount this adventure during the tribal Sun Dance, which
was a great and unusual honor for a woman.

RUNNING EAGLE—WOMAN WARRIOR OF THE BLACKFEET

701 Running Eagle has become the most famous woman in the
history of the Blackfoot Nation because she gave up the
462 work of the household in exchange for the war trails usually
[555] followed by men. In fact, she became so successful on her
war adventures that many men called her a chief and eagerly
followed her whenever she would take them.

feet, and Bowdash, as she is named here, had gone back and 171
forth trying to mediate between them. On her last trip she deceived the Blackfeet while the Flathead, as she knew, were making their escape to Fort Hall. [She was] killed by the Blackfeet after saving the party of Flathead, the people with whom she had been intimate in her later years."

THE BLOOD WHO RECLAIMED HIS STOLEN WIFE

(And Then Named My Grandfather's Brother for the Incident)

In the days before guns and horses the main reason that our 721
people went to war against others was to capture enemy women, or to recapture women of their own. Because of this, [582]
intertribal marriages are an ancient custom, and actually pure-blooded members of any one tribe are not likely to exist. From 727
stories I have heard, it was not unusual for a whole camp of men to be wiped out and their women captured and brought home by the victors. Of course, some of the captured women were killed also, but if they accepted their fate and were able to work, they were usually married by their captors.

My own family history includes several accounts of captured women. My father's great-grandfather once captured a woman from the Shoshone tribe, which lived in the country south of us. They call themselves River People, but the sign [101]
they made for their name, long ago, means Snake in our version of the sign language, so we call these people Snakes. My 648
father's great-grandfather was a warrior named Big Top, and he had a son with this Shoshone woman before her brothers came up and begged for her release. Big Top let her go, since he had other wives from among his own people. He kept the son, but she was already seven months pregnant with another.

648 The one he kept grew up to become the Little Bear that my family name started from. The one she had after she left the Bloods became Pocatello, a well-known Shoshone chief after whom the city of Pocatello, Idaho, is named.

553 Little Bear had a number of children, including my father's father, and a noted dancer and "Indian gentleman" named Spider. It was Spider who got his name from a famous incident that involved another captured woman. Here is that story.

727 [726] A Blood named Yellow-Painted Lodge went on a buffalo hunt with a group of others. While they were gone, their camp was raided by a Cree war party, which captured most of the women. When the men returned they were quite upset about their loss, but knew that the Crees outnumbered them greatly so did not try to follow. Yellow-Painted Lodge heard that his wife had been captured alive, so he made plans to go and get her back.

648 Yellow-Painted Lodge took with him a number of horses and other goods to give to the Cree in exchange for his wife. Before long he was in the Cree camp and he learned which lodge his wife was in. Yellow-Painted Lodge kissed his wife when he saw her. She told him that she feared for their lives, because her captor had a medicine that was very powerful.

The Crees had gone hunting. When they returned, her captor asked: "Who is our visitor?" The woman said: "It is your brother." The Cree had seen the horses outside, so he knew the purpose of Yellow-Painted Lodge's visit. He was not willing to give the woman up so easily, however. He said: "I will show you the power of my medicine. If you are stronger, then I will take the horses from you and you may have your wife back." 648 789

The Cree took from a small pouch the red-painted wooden figure of a man. The Cree began to sing and drum and soon the figure got up and started toward Yellow-Painted Lodge. His

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wife called to him: "Don't let that thing touch you or you will 648
be dead!" Yellow-Painted Lodge untied a small buckskin bag 789
from his back braid. He took out of the bag a piece of rawhide cut into the shape of a spider. He picked up a patch of grass and placed the spider on it, while he sang his own power song. He covered up the spider with his hand for a moment and blew down between his fingers. When he lifted his hand, the spider had become real and was walking around on the bunch of grass.

Yellow-Painted Lodge sat the spider down on the ground, right in the path of the Cree's little man. The spider jumped forward and grabbed the little figure. In a moment he had the figure all bound up with his thread, dragging it along behind him as he climbed up one of the lodge poles.

The Cree knew that he was defeated. He begged Yellow-Painted Lodge to spare his life. He told him to take back his wife and keep his horses. He offered to give him any other goods that he wished to have. Yellow-Painted Lodge sang another song and the spider dropped his burden and hurried back to the bunch of grass. He covered up the spider and blew on it, and again it looked like a spider-shaped piece of rawhide. He put it back in its buckskin cover and tied it on to his braid. The little figure of the man lay crumpled up where the spider had dropped it.

Yellow-Painted Lodge then told the Cree: "I didn't come 648
here for anything else but my wife. If you will just give me a meal, we will be on our way home. I want you to have the horses I brought and you will be my brother. You can come to our camp and be my guest anytime." The Cree was happy to hear that, and he knew that no further trouble would come once Yellow-Painted Lodge had accepted food in his tipi.

At this time Little Bear had a very sickly baby. While 755
Yellow-Painted Lodge was visiting, he was given the baby to 553
hold, and Little Bear asked the old man to pray for the

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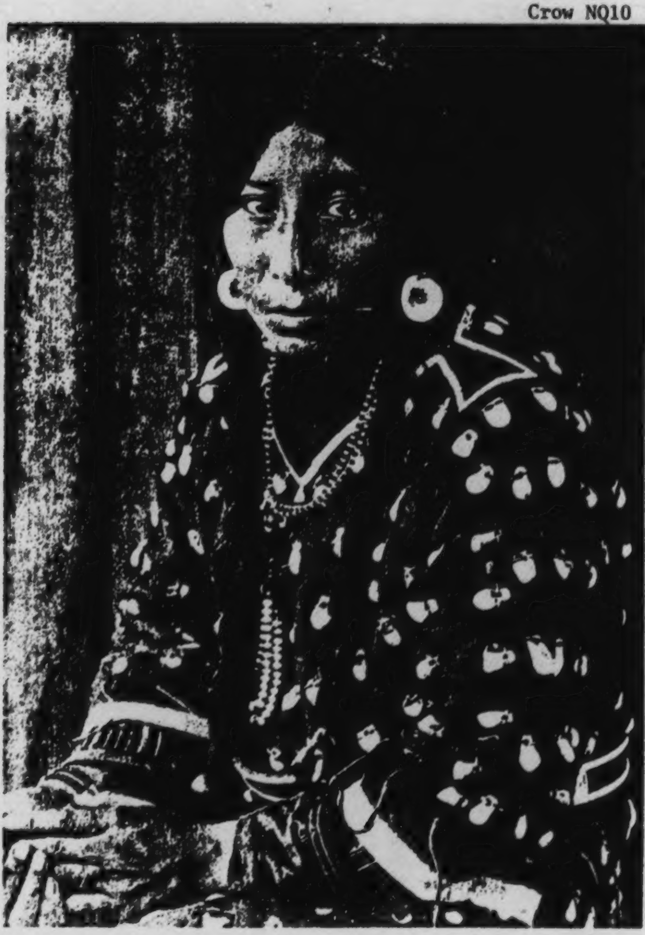

Helen Goes Ahead, a distinguished woman of the Crow tribe, who were my ancestors' most respected enemies. The warriors of the two tribes made a lifelong sport out of capturing each other's women and horses. As a result, we are now often interrelated and there is a lot of visiting back and forth among the former enemies. This woman has a dress of red wool trade cloth, which was of the highest value, decorated with many elk teeth, which were the diamonds of my ancestors. (PHOTO: RODMAN WANNAMAKER, GOOD MEDICINE FOUNDATION)

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dian was revived on herbal medicine to a well 173
man again, just as fit as he was. And in competition 539
his deed had no equal.

Four winters passed, when, at another big 173
encampment at the Belly Buttes in Alberta, Many
Swans daughter got married. Now there is a cus- 539
tom among these Indians, which still exists, 606
whereby in-laws are restricted from meeting and 431
talking to one another; but this restriction can be
bought by enemy property.

One evening as Many Swans took to the entrance of his daughter's teepee a wooden bowl of pemmican, his curiosity overpowered him, and through the tiny opening of the lodge's entrance he peeped and feasted his eyes on the handsome features of his son-in-law.

After his daughter had taken the bowl of food, the father went back to his own lodge, and confessed his guilt to his Queen, who gave him a thorough tongue-lashing and [asked] him if he did not know that he needed enemy property to pay his son-in-law to look in his face.

"Ah Okee" (all right then), said Many 173
Swans to his Queen, "if it needs enemy property, 539
enemy property he will get. We shall move our
camp tonight and start for the Big Horn River to 648
the Crow Nation."

The next morning just his circle camp stones were to be seen of his outfit. It was a puzzle to all, why he did not leave a word to any one; they saw that he went south, but that was all.

On the way, Many Swans killed Buffalo. The meat filled many parflesh bags of dried meat and pemmican. The trip took the Blood Indians eight days.

Arriving in [the Crow] camp in broad daylight, the enemy did not suspect foul play from Many Swans. Many Swans picked out a big painted teepee, and set his own up beside it. On sighting the new lodge by the painted one, the Crow Indians came over from all sides of the encampment to ascertain who the newcomer was, and the origin of his expedition.

The owner of the big painted teepee was

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Chief Wolf Tail, Head Chieftain of all the Crow Nation. Wolf Tail, standing outside his teepee, called a loud invitation for Many Swans and his family.

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During the conversation, Many Swans explained his mission to the Chief, who accepted everything and welcomed him to his tribe, also promising him Crow property when he was ready to go home. This old custom of restricting sons-in-law from meeting willfully his parents-in-law might seem very silly to some readers, but the old Indians are even now very serious in regards to it, although it is dying off among the younger generation, very sorry to say. However, considering the lashing of tongues of some mothers-in-law, we think this is a very good custom.

[606]

Many Swans, having fast buffalo runners, became very useful to the Crow Tribe in the way of getting Buffalo meat and was naturally welcomed by all. Now there is a custom among all Indians, that groups of men near the same age form Societies; these Societies meet and compete with their brave deeds.

The members of the groups whose deeds were not equalled by the opposing group would be the winners, and they would paint black on the faces of their rivals. It was great fun, and it was encouragement to the younger warriors to become real brave.

One evening, while Chief Wolf Tail was smoking with his friend Many Swans, he told him that there was to be a competition of deeds the next day, and that he belonged to one of the parties. Would he, the Blood, join his Society since he was the same age? "Ah, I will my friend," said the Blood, who spoke good Crow.

The next sun came with loud chantings of war songs, tom toms, and incantations from the opposing parties. Young men went about their chores with the staked horses. Smoke poured from the teepee tops while the morning meal was being cooked. Some did their cooking outside on tripods. After all this was over, the preparation for the competition began. The warriors began to

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come to the centre from all sides of the camp in full war paint and feathers. Some right nude but for breach cloths.

Then they began to take their places in the two rows marked out; the rows ran from west and east. The junior group with Running Rabbit their leader, were on the left from the west, the seniors with Chief Wolf Tail and Many Swans on the right.

After all were seated on their crossed legs, old men not interested in the contest got up and sang songs of praise in which they called out names from each party. The ones named would get up to relate their deed. Some merely related what they did, and gave proof such as scars of old wounds or scalps and weapons they got from the enemy. Others acted their doings as in sham fighting, with all the reality of a battle for life and death. It was looking gloomy and bad for the juniors when at last Running Rabbit got up. He was naked but for his breach cloth and feathers. An arrow tied to his left shoulder, and a big red blotch mark under his left shoulder blade, over an ugly old scar, he went towards the centre of the space; everybody kept mum. After chanting his warsong, he walked back and forth looking very brave and serious. He took the arrow off his shoulder, and holding it high up he said, speaking very loudly:

"You are all aware of the story of my arrow, you saw what condition I was in, when I came amongst you. And you yourselves my seniors extracted the arrow from my shoulder."

Holding the arrow high up. "But so that your friend, the Blood, will know, I will tell it again. It was at Many Rivers Junction that I fought in a pit fight against the whole Blackfeet Nation, and had not my brother got killed and my arrows run out, I'd be fighting yet, but I got hit and had to run." Then, sticking the arrow in the ground, he said, "Here it is, beat my deed if you can, and tell your friend, Many Swans, the Blood Indian who is amongst you now, to come forward and tell us what he has done. I see that he has his paint on."

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The warwhoops and yells of applause from the juniors were deafening. After the noise had died down, Wolf Tail gave his friend a look, which he understood. He started to get up, but Wolf Tail motioned him down. Getting up, the Chief perambulated the lines, singing and chanting songs of praise for his friend, calling his name several times, then he went back to his place. 173 539 648

With that encouragement, the Blood Indian got up, dressed in the attire as he was four years ago back home. Singing his war song, and his woman walking closely behind, he went down between the lines and back, then strode near the arrow that Running Rabbit had stuck in the ground. Although the whole camp was standing around the contestants there was hardly a word to be heard.

"My juniors and my friends," he said, "I will not speak many words. I have one deed to relate, and it is this. What Running Rabbit has just related is my doing. That arrow there is mine, and I will vouch for this by having you compare that arrow with mine. The all powerful is looking and listening to me, this was my doing single handed."

At this, one of the juniors came forward and one of the Seniors. They took the arrows for examination, they saw that all the arrows were feathered with the same bird, a white feather with a black tip, and all headed with red flint, the same in length. They were identical in every respect.

The senior took all the arrows, holding them in front of him. He walked up his line with them for examination. Then over to the opposing line. Then giving them to Many Swans, said, "My friend, here is where you claim your arrow." Many Swans, taking them, bowed his head. This was his thanks.

Then turning to Running Rabbit, Many Swans said, "Now for your slur about my paint. You are well named, Running Rabbit. If you had

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not run like your namesake, that time on the top of Belly Buttes, and I let loose another arrow at you, you would not be here today. There was no pit fight, no crowd. I've got your bow and arrows, your robe, your moccasins, and your brother's scalp. That is why I am painted."

The roar of warwhoops and yells from the whole camp was earsplitting. Then the seniors, as one, rushed forward to the juniors, blackening their faces. The contest broke up. It is not unusual in these contests for a defeated party to take their blackening good-naturedly. But in this case Running Rabbit was so insulted by the enemy Indian that he was uncontrollable with rage. He was indelibly branded as a false talker.

The losers withdrew to their teepees to wash their faces. Running Rabbit was without his famous relic, the arrow. The seniors, who were the winners, with Many Swans and Wolf Tail in the lead, marched around the inner circle of the camps with great triumph, beating their tomtoms, and singing their song of victory.

The Crow Indians had great admiration for their new member. But Running Rabbit swore revenge. Running Rabbit was very jealous. One night, after all the lights were out, he gave the Chief an unexpected visit.

"I'll listen," said Wolf Tail, "What do you want?"

"I want to buy your enemy friend from you, so as to kill him," said Running Rabbit. "I will give you four of my best horses and four mules. Give me the privilege of killing the Blood Indian in the next teepee."

"You don't ask for much," said the Chief. "What do you think he is, an elk or buffalo? You are sore because you had your face blackened. Well, it was coming to you for false talking. Go on out of here or I'll call my friend over."

Running Rabbit went out. The next day, thinking the matter over, he thought he would try the Chief's weakness, which was his passion for women. Running Rabbit had a grown-up daugh-

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ter. The next night he went to the Chief's teepee again. 173 539 648 ●

"Ah, what is it this time," said Wolf Tail.

"I mean what I speak this time," said the younger man. "I will double the animals and I will give you my daughter in wedlock. Let me kill the Blood Indian." It was brief and to the point. The Chief was silent for a long time and then said, "All right then, but leave my name out of this, and do your deed far out of the camps. Sometime when he is out running buffalo, for instance," said the Chief.

Wolf Tail's wives, who seemed to be fast asleep, heard everything and were very mad. These women were not going to have a younger woman with them. They were very jealous. The next day, after Many Swans had gone out for Buffalo meat, the Chief's wives went over to visit his wives.

These women told everything they had overheard, and that the Blood women were not likely to see their husband alive again. However, that evening Many Swans did come back and very much alive. The women, rushing out of their teepee, greeted their husband as if he really did come back from his Happy Hunting grounds on the Sand Hills. Many Swans, after recovering from the shock, demanded the reason for their unusual greeting. The women told what they had learned from Wolf Tail's wives. Hearing this, the Blood thought it was time to leave for home. It was now summer, and his People would be gathered on the sacred west slope of the Belly Buttes, and he owed the All Powerful many rites.

Garbed and painted in his war regalia, his bow and arrows slung on his back, Many Swans went around the inner circle of the camps, singing his war song and telling the Crow Indians that they were not enough in this camp to kill him and that he was going back into his lodge, and for them to come and try their luck, and see what would come out of it. The members of the Society he had joined learned that he was not in the

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right temper, gathered together, and went over to his teepee. Many Swans went out to meet them. Seeing that they were unarmed and acting friendly, he went back into his teepee and invited them to come in. 173 539 648 ●

After having been seated, one of them, talking very mildly, demanded the reason of their brother's loudtalking around the camps. Many Swans explained to them how he was being sold or betrayed by the Head Chief Wolf Tail to Running Rabbit, and that he had made up his mind to go back to his own tribe. The Crows, seeing that their brother member had no intention of staying with them any longer, told him,

"It is not our wish that you should leave this way. We owe you too much for what you have done for us, and we want to show you a little appreciation. Wait today anyway, we will hold a dance in which we'll give you things to go home with. Those staked horses and mules that the Chief got from Running Rabbit will be yours and we will dethrone him." Many Swans accepted their kind pleading.

The big give-away dance was held, and when it was over, Many Swans was richer by twenty head of horses and two pack loads of buckskin paraphernalia.

The next day Many Swans left the Crow's encampment after a sad farewell to his friends. Four of them went with him as far as Roaring River, which is now named Great Falls by the paleface. . . .

Many Swans made his last camping stop just across Spruce Pit Fall River, now named the St. Mary's River. From here Many Swans scouted ahead and sure enough the whole tribe was on the sacred slopes of the Buttes. He waited till darkness came, then he packed his stuff up for the last time.

Arriving in the dead of night, he put up his teepee in the gap of the circle of camps which was his place, near his son-in-law's. Next morning, early risers seeing his lodge announced his arrival, 173 539

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and relatives and friends rushed over to greet him. 173

After tenderly kissing his daughter, Many 539 *Swans told her that all the enemy property he brought was for her husband and that he may* [606] *come over for a greeting. Thus was bought with enemy property this restriction which prevented* [431] *these parents from seeing and meeting their son-in-law. The next day a big dance of victory was held in the Bougher Lodge over the arrow that Many Swans had recovered.*

BIRD RATTLER

Joe Beebe's uncle, Bird Rattler, lived among the 177 Crows for several years during his youth. Bird Rattler was born in 1859 to Red Bird Tail, a Piegan, and Woman's Word, a Blood. His grandfather was also named Bird Rattler. His mother's parents were The Tongue Eater and Fine Success Woman.

When Bird Rattler was just a boy, he left home and ended up at a camp of Crow People, who live today in southeast Montana. They were [648] then still at war with our People, though their Old Ways were much like ours. When he arrived among the Crows, Bird Rattler went up to an old man standing outside his lodge by some horses. He asked the man, in sign language, if he could [201] take care of the horses in exchange for a place to sleep. It was a custom in the old days for poor or orphaned boys to live with a successful family and help care for their horses and property.

At first the Crows suspected Bird Rattler to be a spy for a war party, but when no enemy showed up he became an accepted member of the camp. The old man asked him if he could hunt buffalo. Bird Rattler put his fists to the sides of [201] his head and wiggled his thumbs, explaining he could only hunt the young ones. Boys began training to hunt buffalo by going after the less dangerous young ones. The old man gave Bird Rattler one of his choice buffalo runners for the hunt. To

came a famous winner. He warned anyone who 231
came near the horse that no Medicine must ever
be used on it, nor must it ever be ridden double.
One weekend Bird Rattler let his brother Running 231
Rattling take Apistokinii to a nearby race. 593
Many good horses were participating, and Running
Rattling became worried about the strong [426]
competition. So he asked a Medicine Man known [541]
for his successful Powers with horses to give some
of his Power to Apistokinii. The Medicine Man [789]
did, and Apistokinii won the race. That evening
Running Rattling rode the horse back home in
the company of a friend. When the friend's horse [492]
stepped on a sharp stone and went lame, Running
Rattling invited him to ride double. Not long
after, they came to a narrow ravine. Running Rattling
urged Apistokinii forward to jump over it.
Burdened with two riders, Apistokinii did not
complete the leap fully. His hind legs slipped
back down the embankment, breaking both hips.
Apistokinii sat, unable to rise. Running Rattling
walked home the rest of the way greatly worried.
He went to bed and said nothing until the next
morning. Bird Rattler was quite saddened when
he was told what happened. He took his rifle and
shot Apistokinii, then covered him with his finest
Hudson's Bay blanket. It was not until much later
that he discovered his brother had disobeyed his
orders.

Bird Rattler's last raid did not end as well as 721
his others. On returning to camp with newly stolen
Crow horses, he and his partners, Weasel Tail 648 ●
and Black Looking, were arrested by Mounted
Police. They were put in ball and chains in the
guardhouse at Fort MacLeod. Managing to
escape, they fled south to their relatives among
the South Piegans of Montana. Weasel Tail and
Black Looking returned to live in Canada, years
later, after the incident had been officially forgotten.
Bird Rattler stayed in Montana to become a
successful farmer, an honorable tribal judge, and
Keeper of the Piegan's sacred Circle Dance Medicine
Pipe Bundle until his death in 1939.

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was after dark when the last person danced with 778
the sacred Pipe and returned it to the new 796
Owner, bringing the transfer ceremony to a close. 432

HISTORY OF THE BACKSIDE-TO-THE-FIRE PIPE

Part of the Spirit dwelling within each sacred 778
Bundle is the history of the Bundle and of those
who formerly owned it and prayed with it. What [115]
I know of this Pipe I learned from my two
Teachers, Atsitsina and Mokakin, each of whom [869]
had already kept that Bundle.

It is called the Backside-to-the-Fire Pipe because the sacred Stems are placed within the Bundle in the direction opposite that of Pipes in other Bundles. Our other sacred Pipe Bundles must always hang on a west wall, facing Sun's first light from the east, and the Pipestems must be placed in the Bundle so that the mouthpieces point to the south, where the lodge fire is. But the tradition of the Backside Bundle calls for the mouthpieces to point North; thus the "backside" of the Pipes face the fire. This is according to spiritual directions given to the Pipe's first Keeper.

White Horn, an uncle of the ceremony's
present leader, had been the first Blood man to
own this Pipe. He had it transferred to him by [439]
Drum, a member of the Sarsi tribe. Although the [425]
Sarsi People belong to a different language group,
they share a long alliance and dependence with [648]
our People, and have adopted most of our religious and cultural customs. Thus, their Medicine Pipe Bundles are similar to ours. The main Stem of the Bundle looks like a Medicine Pipe from the Crow People, so the Bundle may originally have come from them.

White Horn had the Bundle for many years, [764]
and because he was so fond of it his family decided
to bury it with him when he died. Before the [787]
burial, one of our head men, Day Chief, was
instructed in a dream to take the main Pipe from

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Our head chief at the end of the Buffalo 778
Days was Red Crow. Before him our head chief 175
was Red Crow's uncle, Pinukwiim, or "Seen-
From-Afar." He was so named because he often 484
traveled great distances to visit people of other tribes. There is a story that he led a party of men as far south as Mexico, a journey that took about a year. Pinukwiim brought back the Different-People Pipe from one of his visits to the Mandan People, who lived far to the east in the area of present-day North Dakota.

Pinukwiim and his wife boarded a keel-boat belonging to the American Fur Company for part of their trip east. They left Fort McKenzie in present-day northern Montana, in the spring of 1833, after the ice broke up in the Missouri River.
The company was shipping its winter trade of [439]
hides and furs and was eager to have the trade of the Blackfoot divisions, in whose country Fort McKenzie was located. It was to the company's advantage to have an influential man like Pinukwiim riding one of their boats.

They passed through the dangerous country of the Assiniboine tribe in order to reach the fur company's Fort Union at the junction of the Mis-
souri and Yellowstone rivers. Our people and the [648] ●
Assiniboines are traditional enemies, but a brief peace had been brought about by the fur company before Pinukwiim's journey.

At Fort Union, Pinukwiim and his wife met [648]
a party of Mandan People, who invited them to
their earth lodge village. They were treated with [177]
honor and respect during their stay. The Mandans gave them each a Powerful holy Bundle when they prepared to return home. His wife was given a sacred buffalo headdress from a Mandan
women's society. This headdress was later taken [575]
into our own Motokiks Society. Pinukwiim was given the sacred Pipe we now call the Different-People Pipe in memory of the Mandans and their earth lodges.

The return trip took thirty-four days. The German explorer Prince Maximilian noted in his journal that he saw the Blood couple in a Hidatsa

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herd. My neighbor's horses just happened to be grazing along my way, so I walked toward them to try my luck. I learned right away that grazing horses aren't eager to make friends with strangers who appear silently out of the dark. The whole bunch stampeded before I got within roping distance, except for a white horse, which I approached slowly. I thought if I could get a rope on that one I could use it to catch up with the others and herd them away. I was able to walk right up to that white horse. Then I saw that the poor thing was hopelessly lame. I realized why raiders in the Old Days preferred the horses tied to lodges—they were not only the best ones, but maybe the only ones they could get near. 123 [721]

GEORGE FIRST RIDER: EARLY DAYS ON THE BLOOD RESERVE

Among those still living who remember the old stories and their importance back in the Old Days is George First Rider. Earlier, we read some of his doctoring accounts. Here is what he has to say about the early days on the Blood Reserve, as well as his own life. 115

Oki, I am going to tell the story about the Given to Us [The treaties]. I wasn't at the first Given to Us. [Treaty No. 7, signed in 1877 by the chiefs of the Bloods, North Piegans, Blackfoot, Sarsi, and Stonies. The reserve given to our People by that treaty was farther north than our present one. The Bloods moved to the present reserve in 1883, after Red Crow advised the government that this was a traditionally favorite area for the People and that they would be happier there.] My father was there at the ridge into the river [Blackfoot Crossing, East of Calgary, Alberta—site of the signing of Treaty No. 7]. A lot of the People were given double—after the children were counted with one family the parents sent them over to be counted with another family so they were given again—they got some more money. 173 648 657

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We were given seven completes [dollars] and 651 *we put the fives [five dollars] into funds, and that's* 648 ● *where the promises were made. . . . Shorty* 173 *[nickname of Colonel MacLeod] said, "You will put these fives into funds," and Tall White Man [Lieutenant-Governor David Laird] gave us rations. When Shorty Gave to Us he announced it hard [he repeated his statements in English after the People were told in Blackfoot by the interpreter]. Shorty said, "The Chief Woman [Queen Victoria] made truce with you with these payments. Now you are all the children of the Chief Woman." He told us she said, "Nobody will bother my children now—they are my children." She told us to put away our weapons, our bows and arrows, our daggers, and the sacred things we used for war. The Chief Woman told us, "Do not steal and do not go on the warpath anymore. I will give you all the birds and animals to eat." That is why trapping is not forbidden on an Indian's* [224] *land. A person will do what he can to get food. [Hunting and trapping are allowed year-round on the reserve.]*

Shorty told us: "These are the promises we make to you. You are promised that the seven dollars will never cease to exist. You will be given rations." Oki, we were also promised education, and medical care. That day, when they were giving [191] *the promises, there was no one of us that was educated and spoke white-man talk. The interpreter was not a full Indian, and he left out a lot of words. There were a lot of words that he didn't translate.*

The Old People offer holy smokes to each [782] *other. They will say, "We will talk straight as the* [276] *straight hole in the pipestem." The reason why the stem is long on the pipe that we smoke is that a promise will last long. Oki, they looked for a way how they are going to make an oath. The Old People couldn't make the white people swear on the pipe because they didn't believe in it. So, the Old People were shown to swear on the longest term of life. They were made to swear on the* [177]

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Holy Writings [the Bible]. . . . But they swore 657
in their own way: "When the Sun ceases to shine, 648
and the rivers have flown away dry, and the grass 173
no longer grows, that will be the end of the Treaty [177]
—the education, rations, medical care—all these
biggest promises in our life."

When I was young, my father and many oth- 657
ers trapped coyote cubs. [The newly-arrived cattle 173
ranchers hated coyotes and wolves, so the rancher-
controlled government offered large bounties for [224]
the pelts of these animals. Many of our People [434]
eagerly hunted for the pelts in order to supple-
ment the government's subsistence rations allowed.]

The Many-White-Horns-Owners [ranchers], we gave them our food vouchers and they gave us rations—flour, baking powder, sugar and tea and meat. [The ranchers exchanged the food vouchers for money at the agency.] Then they opened their lands to us to go and hunt coyote cubs. . . .

Those People of that time all had horses. Very [231]
few didn't have horses. Some few didn't farm.
All they had was a mower. They get a voucher [241]
for a mower at Where We Have a Father [the
agency] and then they own a mower. The Bloods [425]
all move camp out on the prairie. They get money [407]
only twice. [The People could camp wherever
they wished, within the boundaries of the reserve. [361]
Permits from the agent were needed to leave the
reserve.] Because of the Big Lease we get twenty- [434]
five dollars when it's about to be a Big Holy Day.
[Christmas Day; each year at Christmastime every [427]
Blood receives twenty dollars as a share paid by several white ranchers who lease huge areas in the northeast part of the reserve. The ranchers pay for leasing the land and give the tribe a percentage of the profits made from the grains they raise and sell. This provides the tribe with its main source of earnings.]

We get our treaty payments at the home of [622]
Owns Many Horses [another name for Crop-Eared Wolf, who succeeded Red Crow as our head chief upon the latter's death in 1900], and

[p.230-B]

der. Often, when the buffalo ran close together, he shot two with one arrow. . . . 224 411

HEAD CHIEF RED CROW

The most famous chief in our recorded history is 622
Red Crow, who was head chief at the end of the Old Days and the beginning of reserve life. Among our People today his name symbolizes the glory of the past. Red Crow was a brave leader [648]
when enemy war parties still threatened our People, but was also a peace advocate when his People were asked to join in the native uprising known as the Riel Rebellion, and when his People were angered by the white settlers and their government. Red Crow certainly helped make it a fact that the Blood (and Blackfoot) People never fought the intruding government with arms.

Like many leaders faced with trials of such 622
dramatic changes as loss of the buffalo and restric- 156
tion to a reserve of land, Red Crow did not perform his duties in a manner that pleased everyone. Some of our Old People today still talk [423]
with bitterness about some of his doings, such as his sale of choice ranchland on the west side of [657]
the reserve for fifty cents an acre. He also gave a [435]
group of Mormons a ninety-nine-year land lease that includes the present site of Cardston, Alberta. [427]
Red Crow later said that he understood the agreement only to be a rental arrangement. The interpreter, a Cree half-breed, admitted years later that the Mormons had paid him well to misinterpret the documents to which Red Crow put his mark. Red Crow trusted his Mormon friends because they treated him well and often filled his [609]
buggy with groceries when he went to visit them.

As head chief, Red Crow had the final say in 622
most matters pertaining to the Bloods. Yet he was 648
not known as an orator and preferred to let his subchiefs speak for him. When he went east in [484]
1885 to meet with government officials in Ottawa, he was accompanied by One Spot, then assistant head chief. These two Bloods were part of a

[TEXT CONTINUED ON PAGE 238-C]

21: Hungry Wolf F-4,5 (ca. 1972) 1977
NF6 Blackfoot NF6
Blood

Canadian Blackfoot delegation that included 622
Northern Axe, head chief of the North Piegans, 648
and Crowfoot, head chief of the North Blackfeet,
and his assistant, Three Bulls. Father Lacombe
guided the delegation and served as interpreter.

The Blackfoot chiefs received attention 622
wherever their train stopped. In Winnipeg, 177
Manitoba, they were taken out to dine at that
city's finest restaurant. After completing their
meals, the chiefs sat down on the floor and relaxed
while smoking a pipe. Newspaper writers
and hordes of onlookers watching the group
through the restaurant's windows thought the
pipe-smoking quite a spectacle, while the restaurant's
head waiter cringed at this show of "primitive
behavior." Red Crow returned from this trip [829]
with the realization that there was no hope of
returning to the Old Ways. His People listened
with awe as he told them of the many wonders he
had seen—tall buildings, big ships, and endless
varieties of strange material goods. But they
found it hard to imagine that the white people in
the east were as countless as the buffalo used to
be.

[p.238-C]

21: Hungry Wolf F-4,5 (ca. 1972) 1977
NF6 Blackfoot NF6
Blood

On the Red Deer were pitched the lodges of 721
the Bloods, Blackfoot, Piegans, and Sarcees. [The 159
Sarsis were always allied with our People. A small [648] ●
tribe who would probably have been wiped out
without this alliance, the Sarsis are from a different
family of the People than the Blackfeet, and
their language is not the same. Yet they adopted
most of our culture, such as dress and ceremonies.]
The Sarcees had lately suffered rather
severely in war with the Crees; a favorite chief
and many others had fallen. On an errand of revenge
a very large party was organized under the
Blood Bull Shakes His Tent. We set out, all 726
mounted, and travelling Northwards at a place
called Round Bushes or Round Timbers we saw a 159
Cree camp in the distance. Some of our wild
young men wanted to ride boldly and attack it,
but we wiser ones told them that they would certainly
be killed, for the distance was so great that
if pursued, they would be overtaken before they
could return to us. These young fellows attempted
several times to go in spite of our advice,
but I headed them off and made them wait and
listen to reason. One of the chiefs called our attention
to a road by which we could all ride almost
unseen to within a short distance of our
enemies' camp. We covered the fronts of our [925]
light-coloured horses with buffalo robes and made
the party look like buffalo and walked our horses
towards a hill between us and the camp. Several
times we had to move through open prairie, but
we walked slow like buffalo, lowering our heads
and horses' necks. When we reached the hill, we
all painted and made ready for action. Leading
my horse, I crawled to the top of the hill where I
saw the Cree men were away running buffalo. In
the short distance between us and the camp were
ten people who were returning with water to the
village. There were two women on ahead, then six
women and one mounted man, and a single
woman bringing up the rear; 9 squaws and one
man, all loaded with water kegs. As soon as I saw
our party behind the hill mounting, I sprang on

[p.246-A]

21: Hungry Wolf F-4,5 (ca. 1972) 1977
NF6 Blackfoot NF6
Blood

Winter had set in when we reached our 727 Blood camp which was pitched on Stand-off 159 bottom.

Although we were at peace with the Cree, 721 they stole a number of our horses at that time. I 159 led a war-party of seven men to see what we could do in retaliation. The Cree were bad Indians, who deserved to be punished. They were not honest, they stole horses. [It would have been difficult to [648] form any sort of stable peace with the Crees in the Old Days, since the People of that tribe lived in many scattered bands over the plains. Each band was governed by its own chiefs, who could not make peace for any of the other bands. The [555] stealing of horses, of course, was an accepted means of testing bravery and personal skill among most all of the People who used-horses in North America.]

We being mounted made fast time, and 726 going in a North easterly direction, saw in the 159 distance a big blue hill looming up, and near it a large Indian camp. Between us and the camp the country was very level so that it was not safe to travel any closer in daylight. During our waiting hours that day I went up on top of a hill with my glass to see what might be in sight. I saw a large war party enter the camp. Later in the day I saw a single tall man following up the trail of the war party. He appeared to be unarmed. I ran to my horse, mounted, and followed by some young companions, galloped after the lonely man. We reached him just as he was down, drinking from a little rivulet or spring. I searched him for arms, but found nothing. The man was poor, he had not even a knife. I was so disgusted that I left him to the boys, to do as they liked. One said to kill him. I did not like Cree Indians well enough to say no, so I said nothing. And, as there were no arms to take, I did not say, "kill him." The end [782] of the matter was this: I blackened his face, praying to the Sun as I did so, and gave him to the Sun, unhurt, as a present. When I told him that he was free and might go he looked very much

[p.251-A]

21: Hungry Wolf F-4,5 (ca. 1972) 1977
NF6 Blackfoot NF6
Blood

793
302
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Big Wolf. Powerful warrior and former Owner of the Long-Time Pipe (Glacier Studio)

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coming down the road. One of them was riding 726
a horse, the others were walking. So they all 793
rushed out and attacked them. Big Wolf chased
the one on the horse. Before anybody got hurt, [648]●
Ermine Horse found out that the men were
friends, they were Northern Real Crees. Ermine
Horse told the others to return all the things that
they had taken from the Crees, then they all sat
down to smoke.

After a while the Bloods started arguing with [578]
each other. Some of them said they didn't come
to make any treaties. Maybe the Crees figured out
what they were arguing about, because one of
them lifted his gun and fired at the Bloods. A
fight started. Two of the Crees were killed right

visitors, mostly young fellows. It looked like they 723
were either planning a society take-over or a war party. He gave me a seat next to him and told me that he and Calf Robe and Prairie Chicken Old Man were planning to lead a war party and that they wanted to invite me along. I told them that I was waiting for Cross Guns to come back from Montana with more bullets and that the two of us had already planned to go on a raid. They agreed to wait until Cross Guns came back up.

In a couple of days Morning Writing came to see me again. He said that Young Pine was anxious to leave, even if there was no sign of my brother. Young Pine's tipi was even more crowded than before. I guess all the young guys in camp wanted to come along on this raid. Young Pine told them to go and steal horses from the nearby white ranchers that night and to hide them in the river bottom. He said that we would be leaving the next night. Most of the young guys took off right away to find horses to steal. Young Pine told me to sit still and wait, so I did.

After all the young guys were gone, Calf Robe told me that it would be impossible to get very far with a large group like that without being seen by the Mounties. So he had sent them off to find horses just in order to get rid of them for the night. Young Pine told me that he and Prairie Chicken Old Man and Calf Robe and Crazy Crow wanted me to join them that same night. I told them that I was not ready to go that soon, and that I needed the bullets that Cross Guns was
going to bring. They told me that they had extra [411]
bullets for the .30–40 that I was carrying; it had a
lever action and used shells. They told me to meet [103]
them that night at a place we called the Pine Tree, a place along the St. Mary River between Stand Off and Magrath where a large, lone pine used to stand.

That night we all met at the Pine Tree. We 726
had to be careful not to be seen leaving camp.
There were many Indian policemen watching for [625]
horse raiders. That had been against the law since [685]

[648]

21: Hungry Wolf F-4,5 (ca. 1972) 1977
NF6 Blackfoot NF6
Blood

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Young Pine in his minor chief's outfit, around 1915. (Joe Young Pine Collection)

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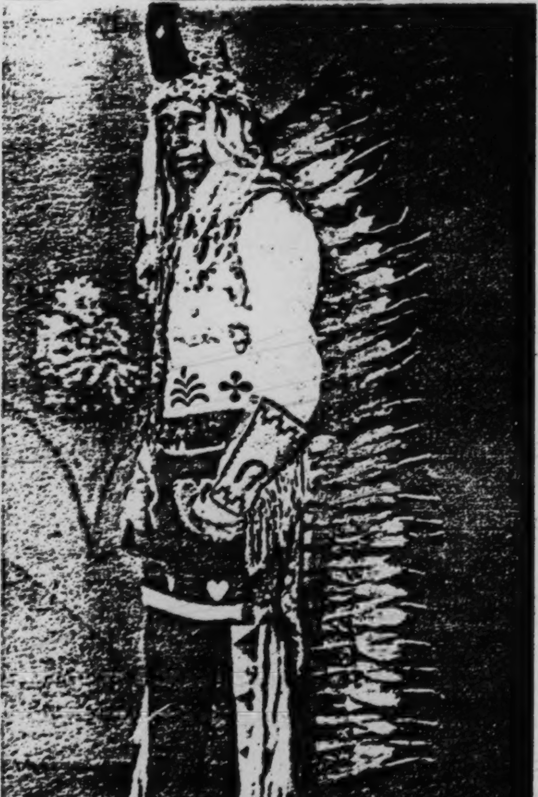
the treaty. By morning we had walked some ways 726
past where Magrath now stands. We only had [685]
two horses along with us. Young Pine and Prairie [648]
Chicken Old Man rode double on a roan while [648]
Calf Robe and Crazy Crow rode on a bay. I [492]

[p.289-B]

21: Hungry Wolf F-4,5 (ca. 1972) 1977
NF6 Blackfoot NF6
Blood



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Nick King and the famous One-Horn Headdress. This [701]
photo was taken just before he left for overseas duty with
the Canadian forces during World War I. The headdress [648]
was considered a very powerful war medicine, so Nick
King took it apart, packed it inside of its rawhide con- [415]
tainer, and took it with him to the war in Europe. It is
not known that he actually wore it in battle, but it is said
that someone in Europe took a great liking to it, for he
did not bring it back to the Blood Reserve. (Glenbow
Archives)

[p.320-A]

looks so clean and new. When we said yes, she 778 told us this story: One time Ponah was visiting the Red Crows. She knew her sister was always a good housekeeper and never liked to see dirty things around. When the Red Crows had gotten their Pipe, the old shawl covering it clearly showed its many years of protecting the Bundle. So during this visit, when Ponah noticed her sister washing what looked like the Bundle's shawl, she went to look at the Bundle and saw that an ordinary blanket was covering it. "You must be [784] crazy," she told her sister. "Do you want us all to drown in a big thunderstorm? You're not supposed to wash holy things like that!" Poor Mrs. Red Crow felt very badly. She had never been told such a thing.

Now she holds sacred duties as the Scabby 793 Bull for the Motokiks, a position transferred to her a few years ago by Doreen Day Rider, the [425] previous Scabby Bull.
[424]

MRS. ROSIE DAVIS

Mrs. Rosie Davis is the oldest person on the 165 Blood Reserve.

I don't know how old I am. Nobody ever told me the exact year of my birth. People usually say that I am one hundred years old, and they are probably right. I was still a little girl when the 1877 Treaty was signed.

I was born in Fort Benton. My mother mar- 582 *ried a white man named Smith, who worked on a Missouri River steamboat out of Fort Benton. We lived there when I was young; my father* 648 ● *would come to see us between trips. My mother's father, Iron Pipe, took my mother and me up to the Blood Reserve so that we would be registered on the band rolls for the signing of the 1877 Treaty. He told my father he would try to send us back down to Fort Benton somehow.*

When the treaty was finally settled, my grand- 586 *father could not find anyone to accompany us*

SOCIETY DANCES.

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[555]
[782]
[793]

In former times, the succeeding days were apportioned to the men's societies (the ikunukats) in the order of their rank, beginning at the lowest.[1] There seems to have been no fixed allotment of time to each, only the order of succession being adhered to. The ceremonies were determined chiefly by the respective society rituals, though the recounting of deeds in war was given great prominence. As a rule, each society closed its ceremonies by offering parts of its regalia, etc., to the sun, a custom still observed by the Blood (See vol. 11, this series, fig. 19, p. 411). After the highest society had completed its function, the leading men of the tribe held a kind of a war dance in which coups were recounted. In this dance, again, rattles were beaten upon a rawhide. The organizations or persons having charge of the day's ceremonies must furnish the feast and all necessaries. The medicine woman and her husband usually repair to the dancing lodge each day. The man usually takes his pipe and tobacco and furnishes the smoking for the guests who sit around. His wife wears the buckskin dress and elk robe, but not the natoas. They sit on the north or right side of the booth and merely are spectators. This closes the ceremonies and camp is broken.

THE TORTURE CEREMONY.

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[171]
[648]
[177]
[177]
[424]

The torture feature, especially prominent in the ceremonies of the Mandan, Hidatsa, and Dakota, was formerly given a place among the dancing lodge ceremonies of the Blackfoot. The information we have seems to indicate that this ceremony had not become thoroughly adjusted to its place in this series at the time of its prohibition by the United States and Canadian governments. The claim is made by some of the Piegan that it was borrowed from the Arapaho and was not looked upon with much favor. As one man expressed it, "None of those taking the cutting lived to reach old age." It was said that a few Blackfoot warriors once visited the Arapaho at the time of their sun dance where they were put through the cutting ceremony. According to the Blackfoot mode of thought, this means that the medicine rites (and rights) were transferred to them. When they returned, they induced others to take the cutting, to whom, of course, the rites were transferred. Whether this historical statement is accurate or mythical, we have no means of knowing, but we are inclined to give

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[1] This series, Vol. 11, 365–474.

soft and pliable as velvet. The result: a well-tanned cow buffalo 281
robe for which we gave five dollars worth of trade goods. 435

Persistent hunting of the buffalo herds caused them to drift ever 224
farther eastward from us, until, by the beginning of January, the [221]
nearest of them were from Armell Creek eastward. From that time [462]
on, the hunters, with their accompanying women helpers, had to go [132]
farther and farther eastward and southward to make their kills—hard work in the intense cold and quite deep snow. In early February, when returning from a hunt, one member of a party froze to death, and others were so badly frosted that they were crippled for life.

Beginning in December, we daily had a good trade for buffalo 439
robes. Since we had no whisky, some of our customers occasionally
went up to Reed and Bowle's place (Reed's Fort) for a spree. So 000
was it that one day, in a drunken row up there, our friend Bear Chief killed a Red River half blood named Flory.

Ours was a contented, prosperous camp when, early in March, 648 ●
dire disaster came upon us. Arrived one afternoon from Fort Benton, Lieutenant Crouse with a dozen mounted infantrymen, and he tremblingly announced that he had come at once to escort the Pikunis back to their own country, to their agency on Badger Creek. This he gave out at a gathering of the Pikuni chiefs and warriors, with Kipp as interpreter. It was, he said, that "Colonel" Henry Brooks (a rancher close above us) complained that the Pikunis were killing his cattle. That, of course, could not be allowed. Therefore the Pikunis must go.

Roared Chief Running Crane: "That white man is a liar. We
have killed none of his white horns (cattle). We would be foolish to [262]
kill them when we have constantly all the real meat (buffalo) that we want."

Said the head chief, White Calf: "Our hunters have seen this white man's white horns grazing with our buffalo even as far down as Bear River (Musselshell). That is where his white horns have gone."

Then Little Plume: "Soldier chief, are you crazy? You say that we must return to our country. This, right here where we are, is our country."

Lieutenant Crouse: "Not yours, this part of the country. Your

648 *country is from Marias River and Missouri River north to the country of the Red Coats.*"

White Calf: "Soldier chief, you are mistaken. Twenty-five summers ago, where this river and Big River come together, we made treaty with men that Your and Our Grandfather (the president) had sent to us. That treaty was put in writing. Those men signed it; our fathers signed it, put their names to it. I, myself, saw them sign it. [131] That writing said that from the Red Coat's country south to Musselshell River, and from the Backbone (Rocky Mountains) east to the mouth of Little River (Milk), all was our country. Right here, we are in our own country. We will not move up to our agency; no buffalo up there; we would starve."

When Kipp had interpreted that to Crouse, the poor fellow fairly trembled, and after long thought, replied: "Mr. Kipp, have they never been told that President Grant by executive order opened to settlement the country between the Missouri and the Yellowstone, and that President Hayes, also by executive order, opened the country from the Missouri north to the Marias River?"

"No, they know nothing about it," Kipp replied, "and I won't tell them of it for God knows what might then happen."

"Then what am I to do? What can I do?" Crouse whimpered.

"Just tell them that your orders are your orders; that they will have to pack up and go. Then I, myself, will tell them something that I think will work," Kipp answered.

Lieutenant Crouse: "Yes. Tell them this: 'My friends, I feel very sorry for you. I know that it will be great hardship for you to go back north, away from the buffalo, but I can't help it. My chiefs have ordered me to escort you up there. You will have to pack up and start tomorrow.' "

Barely had Kipp finished interpreting that when the big crowd of men surrounding us began to yell: "We will not leave here. We must kill these soldiers." "This is our country. We will not leave it." "Hurry, get your guns. We will kill these dog-face soldiers."

But Kipp had sprung up, shouting and signing: "Listen. Listen to me." And when all had quieted down he turned and said to the chiefs: "White Calf, Little Dog, Little Plume, Running Crane, be wise. Well you remember what white soldiers did to a camp of Pikunis on Marias River, ten winters ago? Without cause, without reason, they sneaked up to it while they slept and killed nearly all of them there, men, women, and children alike.[3] If now you refuse to do what this soldier chief asks of you, hundreds and hundreds of their kind will come, with their big-mouth guns (cannons) and kill you all off."

Said White Calf to the other chiefs: "My friends, this that Raven Quiver tells us is true. Because of our helpless ones, we cannot fight the white soldiers, killers that they are of women and children, even newborn ones at their mothers' breasts. So is it that we have to do as this soldier chief tells us. Say you not so?"

"We are powerless to do otherwise," Little Dog answered. The others sadly nodded assent. "Then go, scatter out, calm our young men, our hotheads, lest they get us into trouble," White Calf advised them, and turning to Lieutenant Crouse, said: "Because you and your kind are killers of women and children, we have to do as you say. But we cannot possibly move tomorrow. We must have at least three days to pack up our belongings, make ready for the long trail back to our agency." To that Crouse readily agreed, and the conference ended.

A little later, White Calf came into our trade room and said to Kipp: "This soldier chief, what did he mean by saying that this is not our country?"

"Will you promise, if I tell you that, to make no trouble now about it?" Kipp asked. And the chief nodded assent. Kipp continued: "My friend, it is that one of Your and Our Grandfathers gave to his white kind all of your country between Big River (Missouri) and Elk River (Yellowstone). And then, not long ago, another of Your and Our Grandfathers did the same with your country between Big River and Bear River."[4]

At that White Calf all but collapsed; he fairly groaned; and after a little, muttering, "Oh, what thieves, what liars are the whites,"

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[3] See "The Baker Massacre," chap. XX of this volume.

[4] For information about the executive orders see James M. Hamilton, *From Wilderness to Statehood* (Portland, Oregon, Binfords & Mort, 1957), 190–91; J. W. Schultz, *Sahtaki and I*, 232–39.

● 648 he turned and left us. There was no singing, laughing, happy chatter in the camp of the Pikunis that night, nor for many a night thereafter.

Myself, I personally knew several of those greedy ruthless Montanans who, working through equally venial senators, congressmen, and officials of the Indian Bureau, caused that 1855 "Stevens Treaty" with the Blackfeet, Gros Ventres, and other tribes to be twice broken. But, for the sake of their living descendents, I will not name them. However, I somehow cannot believe that President Grant and President Hayes knew what they were doing when they put their signatures to the papers authorizing the thefts, the two greatest wrongs that our government ever perpetrated upon its Indian wards. [694] For some years the Blackfeet, Pikunis, have been trying—so far in vain—to be recompensed for the vast territory that was stolen from them.

[439] The northward trek of the Pikunis began on time, and we went with them, for during the winter our four-horse teams and wagons had hauled our buffalo robes and furs to Fort Benton about as fast as we had traded for them. In all we had taken 1,800 buffalo robes; 3,000 elk, deer, antelope hides; and a few fox and beaver skins. Our progress was slow, for the long, constant, and far hunting of the Pikunis had worn most of their horses to skin and bones. More than two hundred of them died before we arrived at Fort Benton. I happened to be present when Lieutenant Crouse met his commanding officer, Colonel Moale, on the street. At once the Colonel began scolding him for his delay in bringing the Indians in. Crouse interrupted with: "Great Caesar's ghost, Colonel, I could not help it!" At which Moale roared: ". . . you, Crouse, if you can't swear like a man, don't swear at all!"

439 On our way from Fort Benton to Fort Conrad, about two hundred more of the Pikuni horses died from exhaustion. There the Pikunis remained with us for several months, tanning and trading to us their remaining buffalo hides and the skins of the antelope and deer that they daily killed.

No sooner were we home than Kipp began planning for the next winter's trade. He talked with the Pikuni chiefs about it, then, mounting a good horse, went north to consult with the Bloods and

woman. Ever since has been trailing around with the Blackfeet. Tried 797
to convince them that there are three gods only: Father, Son, and 177
Holy Ghost. So deridingly they named him Three Persons."

Swimming their horses, rafting their belongings, the tribe crossed 177
the river that afternoon and camped close back of our post. Before [484]
they moved out on the Musselshell, Kipp and Crow Big Feet had some serious talks. Kipp convinced him that the buffalo were going fast—a year or two more of them, and then no more.

"And when they, our real food, are gone, what then for us?" he [262]
asked one day.

"You will have to take to the white man's ways. Raise grains and white horns for food," Kipp answered.

"*Haiya, haiya!*" the chief exclaimed. "What a nothing existence that will be. Better that, when our buffalo pass, we pass too."

Next to arrive were the Kainahs (Bloods), about a thousand of them under chiefs Running Rabbit and Far-Off-in-Sight. After camping a few days close above our post, they moved out on Big Crooked Creek to hunt.

We did a thriving trade with these two tribes for elk, deer-, ante- 439
lope, wolf-, and beaver skins until late fall, when they began bringing
plenty of new, tanned, prime-furred buffalo robes. They were soon 648 ●
joined, to our great surprise, by Louis Riel and about one hundred families of his Red River, French-Cree mixed bloods, and a thousand or so Crees, led by their chief, Big Bear.

These Red Rivers and Crees arrived when both the Blackfeet and the Bloods had moved in to camp at our post for a few days to trade
with us. Both of these tribes were enemies of the Crees. At once the [575]
different bands of the *Ikuni Kahtsi* (All Friends warriors society) [721]
of each tribe began painting and arming themselves, shouting that they would now completely exterminate the dog-face Crees. Well we knew that, if they did fight, our trade, so prosperously begun, would be ruined. Our hearts were low as Kipp sent word to the Blackfoot, Blood, and Cree chiefs to come and counsel with him. They soon arrived, and so for the first time I saw Big Bear: heavily, dumpily built, face coarse and unintelligent, poorly clothed. So different from the tall, fine-featured, alert, well-dressed chiefs of the

24: Schultz F-3 (1877-1947) 1980 NF6 Blackfoot NF6

648 other tribes. He could speak Blackfoot fairly well. For all his unprepossessing appearance he was undoubtedly a man of dominating character and brave, else he could not have been a chief.

The meeting of the Blackfoot and Blood chiefs with Big Bear was apparently fairly friendly. As soon as they were seated, Kipp [273] served to each of them a drink of whisky, then handed to Crow Big [276] Feet to light a big stone pipe, long-stemmed, which he had ready for the occasion. All smoked it by turn, and that was encouraging. Food was set before them and they ate and talked of inconsequential matters. There was another round of whisky. The pipe was refilled and smoked, and then Kipp said to his guests: "My friends, you are camped here in the midst of the last of the buffalo herds. Soon they will be no more. That you may live well upon them so long as they do last, I urge that you camp and hunt in peace with one another. I speak, too, for your women and children. Well you know that your fighting makes widows and orphans of them."

[533] As he spoke, we could hear the young hotheads in the Blood and Blackfoot camps singing war songs and shouting to one another.

Said Crow Big Feet: "I am for peace between us and your Crees, Big Bear. What say you?"

Said Big Bear: "We knew that you all were here, but we had to come or starve, for there was no place else for us to go. I am all for peace. You are many; we are few. I ask you to have pity for us."

Then Running Rabbit: "Hear them out there, singing make-ready-to-fight songs. Let us go quiet them. At once go."

Out they went without further words, Kipp and I close trailing them. First into the Blackfoot camp, where Crow Big Feet briefly said to his warriors that, positively, they were not to fight the Crees. If any disobeyed his order, they would later have to fight him, himself.

From there we hurried to the Blood camp, where Running Rabbit gave like instructions to his warriors, and surlily they listened. Then, as we neared the Cree camp, all hurried out to meet us, and I noted how strained, how anxious was the expression of their faces. But after Big Bear spoke to them they were all smiles and turned back to their various affairs happily chatting and singing.

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Buffalo Robes

Although we feared that this peace agreement would soon be broken by some of the young hotheads of the Blackfeet or Bloods, it actually did last so long as the three tribes remained in that part of the country—until, in fact, they crossed back into Canada. During that winter of 1880–81, they separately camped and hunted on the plains south of the river, coming frequently to trade their buffalo robes to us and, camping close by our post, having a hilarious time of it. 648 ●

Louis Riel's French-Crees, with their high, one-horse, two-wheel, homemade squeaking carts, roamed the plains close about, some of them, and others built and lived in cabins in the river bottoms below us. The men were good hunters and trappers, their women fine tanners of buffalo robes. We liked their trade but did not like them. They were, in fact, more than disliked by all Indian tribes, save the Crees, and by the whites of their country and ours, too. I myself could hardly bear to stand behind the counter and trade with them, for, in their bastard French, they were always reviling us, all the "*sacre Americaines.*" 000

One, however, their leader, Louis Riel, we did not dislike; we pitied him. He often came to trade and to tell Kipp and me of his troubles and his plans. Riel was rather short, rather heavily built, quite white, blue-eyed, with whiskers of almost auburn hue. He had been educated in some Catholic institution for the priesthood but somehow had never been ordained. He had good manners, except that his greetings and his au revoirs were excessively polite. As a leader of his French-Cree people in their quarrel with the Canadian government, he had killed a government official, and, fleeing across the border, had come to the United States and become a naturalized citizen. Now he was planning with Big Bear and his Crees as allies to lead his French-Cree people back there and to occupy the lands in question. Kipp and I repeatedly told him that that could only lead to war. Well, he said, they were all of them going back well armed, with plenty of ammunition, and they were good, experienced fighters; they could overcome the Northwest Mounted Police.

"If necessary, troops would come from England to subdue you," I one day told him, but to that he only laughed.

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ering wood, saw it and ran to tell of their find. Calf Shirt's wives 000
drew his body from the water, carried it to their lodge, asked the various medicine men to help them sing and pray over it for three days and so restore it to life. All refused; they did not want Calf Shirt brought to life, to murder more of his people, they said. The wives, fearing to do otherwise, prayed and sang over the body the prescribed time, then, doubtless with great relief, buried it."[3]

"Well, you saved us the trouble of hanging him when we came to the country," Colonel Macleod said.

PICKETT OBTAINS A WIFE (1883)[1]

AFTER OUR EXCITING YEARS of trading with the Indians for buffalo robes and furs, life at Fort Conrad was very tame for us. Late in that fall of 1882, Joseph Pickett came with his bull train and bullwhackers to winter with us. Except for the bimonthly Fort Benton–Fort Macleod mail stage, travel almost ceased as winter came on. At that 177
time there were few settlers on Marias River: only Mose Soloman, at its junction with the Missouri; I. G. Baker & Company's cattle ranch, Dick Berry, foreman, due north toward Fort Benton; Brian Osborn and his Pikuni wife, seven miles below us; ourselves; Sol Abbot and Henry Powell and their Pikuni families, at Willows Round, twelve miles above us.

One day in December, Osborn came with his wife to trade with 000
us, and Pickett, after seeing the woman, remarked in the presence of his bullwhackers: "How good looking, neat and clean she is. I wish that I could have such a woman."

No more was said about her, but a week or so later, one of the bullwhackers, Nolan by name, rode down to Osborn's place, murdered him, brought his grieving, crying wife up, and said to Pickett: "You said that you wanted a woman like her; well, there she is, herself. I've brought her for you; had to kill her old man to get her."

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[3] Calf Shirt, as one of the representatives of the Bloods, had signed the "Stevens Treaty" on October 17, 1855, at the mouth of the Judith River. The treaty was ratified by the Senate on April 15, 1856. See Ewers, *The Blackfeet*, 205–25.

[1] Published in *The Great Falls Tribune* (November 11, 1936).

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and color. As Lone Wolf, rather than by his English name, he is well 000 known in the art world for his spirited paintings and bronzes of the life of the old West.

Leaving me in charge of Fort Conrad in that spring of 1884, Kipp and Hiram Upham took over the store of the trader up at the Indian agency and built a store and saloon on Birch creek, just off the reservation, and on the Agency-Choteau-Sun River stage and freight road. Placer gold had been discovered in the Sweetgrass Hills. I had considerable trade from the miners there and from freighters and others plying between Fort Benton and Fort MacLeod, but my heart was not in it. The few days that I had spent at Lakes Inside (St. Mary lakes) in the previous autumn had turned me against a sedentary life. I wanted to be up there again, climbing mountains and exploring valleys as yet untrod by white men, living upon trout, the fat meat of bighorns, deer, and elk. On his occasional visits to me to learn how I was getting on, I would tell Kipp of my longings, but always he would reply: "No, sir; you're not going up there to fool away your time. You've got a woman and a boy to support now; and I need you here. Right here you stay."

Passed the summer. Came winter, and about the only travel on the road was the bimonthly Fort Benton–Fort Macleod mail stage. Again I wrote a number of stories for *Forest and Stream*, had much correspondence with its owner and editor George Bird Grinnell, with the result that, in the spring of 1885, he wrote that he would come out in September and go with me on a trip into the Lakes Inside, the St. Mary lakes country. Kipp was glad to have me go with so important a man, and in due time, getting our friend James Dawson to take my place at Fort Conrad, I moved up to the agency to await the stranger's coming. He arrived on the mail stage—a slender, quiet, fine-appearing man of medium height; in outing clothes that showed much use; his baggage a canvas-covered bedroll, a war sack, a Sharps .45 caliber rifle, and a fly rod. No tenderfoot he, we thought, and so were not surprised when we learned that he owned a fine ranch in Wyoming and that he had been the naturalist with General Custer's Black Hills expedition in 1873.

On the evening of Grinnell's arrival, I had head chief White Calf 648

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648 call a meeting of the prominent men of the Pikunis: Little Dog, Little
731 Plume, Saiyi, Running Crane, and others. They gathered in Little
657 Plume's lodge, and when we entered, I said to them: "I bring to
you a true friend of yours. His home is many days' travel to the east; at the edge of the Everywhere Water. When you began to starve, to die, that dreadful winter back, I wrote him about it. What did he do when he had read my letter? He dropped his work, got onto a fire-wagon, went south to Our Grandfather's many-houses town. He went straight to Our Grandfather and told him of your need; told him that you Pikunis would all die unless food, plenty of food, could soon be given you. Said Our Grandfather to him: "How can it be that my Pikuni children are starving, dying, and I not know about it?"

"Answered my friend here: 'Grandfather, it is that your little chief that you have with them, he named Young Person, would not let you know about it because he had many times written you many lies; written you that the Pikunis were following the white man's road, that they had cattle and pigs, grew potatoes and other plants to eat.'

"Said Our Grandfather: 'Too bad. Too bad. Well, they shall not starve any longer than I can get food to them.' And at once he sent for his chief of soldiers, sent for other men, told them what to do. So was it that the soldiers at Point-of-Rocks River (Sun River) brought you food; that Spotted Cap (Charles Conrad) sent you
648 many cattle. So now, my friends, you know that he here beside me and newly come is your real friend and helper."

"Yes! Yes! He is our friend." "Our powerful friend." "He saved us, he is a chief," all cried when I had finished, and one by one came forward and shook hands with Grinnell and earnestly gave him welcome. Then, briefly, he said that he was glad to be there with them, that he hoped to come to them again and again in future summers, that he had other Indian friends, particularly the Pawnees (Wolf People) with whom he had often camped and hunted buffalo.

"*Ha!* The Wolf People! Ever our enemies. You must tell us about them," said Little Plume.

[553] Said Tail-Feathers-Coming-Over-the-Hill: "Later on for that. It

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is that we now have to name our new friend, make him one of us, *a real Pikuni man as, at heart, I know he is.*" 648 553

"Yes, and it must be a powerful name that we give him, a name that will help him to survive all dangers, and attain old age," Saiyi put in. At once the circle gave earnest thought to it. Name after name was proposed and for one reason and another rejected, until, at last, Tail-Feathers-Coming-Over-the-Hill mentioned one that all approved. Whereat he said to Grinnell: "True friend come to us from far, several winters back one of our number died in very old age. He was very wise and of kindly heart, ever helpful to the sick, to helpless widows and fatherless children. Brave he was, a great warrior, victor in many battles with our enemies. He had a very powerful name, a name from a very sacred animal that Sun loves. Without doubt a powerful, sacred name. Helpful friend, come to us from far, we give you that name. You are 'Fisher Hat,' *(Pinutoyi Istsimokan).*"

Exclaimed the others: "We welcome you, Fisher Hat." "We are glad to have you with us this day." Their eyes shining, voices deep and trembly, there could be no doubt of their sincerity. It was really affecting. Grinnell was evidence of it when, haltingly, he told them that he appreciated their good will; that he would ever strive to be worthy of his new name. Then, at length, at their request, he gave them a vivid description of the Pawnees–their country, homes, and occupations, their beliefs and sacred medicines. It was late when we sought our couches.

On the following morning, with my team and wagon, and accompanied by Yellow Fish (Charles Rose) son of a onetime employee of the American Fur Company and a Pikuni woman, we set out for Lakes Inside and that evening camped at the foot of the lower one of them. On the next morning we took to the Indian and game trail running up that east side of the lake and, by much cutting of trees in the aspen groves which it threaded, got our team and wagon out upon the prairie between the two lakes late in the afternoon; then, fording the river, we made camp in the edge of a grove several hundred yards below the foot of the upper lake. We had obtained a good view of it and of the towering mountains rising from its shores, 133

CONCEPTION OF GLACIER NATIONAL PARK (1885)[1]

000 HAVING VISITED THE PAWNEES and the Cheyennes, and written his books about them, *Pawnee Hero Tales* and *The Fighting Cheyennes*, George Bird Grinnell continued his annual outings in our part of the country, Jack Monroe, William Jackson, and I always going 175 with him into the mountains. He was one of the three commissioners 648 who in 1896 made the treaty with the Blackfoot (Pikuni) Indians, whereby they sold the mountain part of their reservation to the United States for $1,500,000.

It is interesting, almost unbelievable, the way in which the proposal to sell the strip came about. During George Steel's last term as agent for the tribe, E. C. Garrett, a mystic, a believer in the supernatural, was his clerk. Garrett, returning from a trip to Helena, brought home an ouija board and was greatly excited about it, claiming that it was a medium by which all that one wanted to know would be revealed. To humor him, George Steel and I by turns would sit with him at the board and, manipulating its letters, make it spell out whatever happened to be in our minds. So was it that he and I invented a character, an old miner named Bedrock Jim, and made him, his spirit, say that he had prospected in the St. Mary lakes country, and on a certain stream running into the river had found gold. He said that, when panning the gravel one day, the Indians had killed him. And at last he revealed that his find had been on Swift Current River.

Garrett so fully believed our wild tale that he outfitted an old-timer named Dutch Louis to prospect up there, and, to Steel's and my great surprise, Louis returned several weeks later with some fine specimens of copper ore that he had found in Swift Current Valley. Word of it spread to Fort Benton, to Helena, and elsewhere. A number of prospectors sneaked in there and confirmed the find; said that there would be a second Butte on Swift Current River. Stories of the richness of the deposits appeared in the newspapers. Influential men wrote the Montana representatives in Congress about it; urged that the government buy that part of the reservation. The majority

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[1] Published in *The Great Falls Tribune* (November 15, 1936).

of us on the reservation thought that it would be well to sell the strip, 175
provided we could get a good price for it. A minority led by Horace 648
Clark was against selling for any consideration whatever. Joseph Kipp and I talked with the leading men of the tribe about it, with the result that the Commissioner of Indian Affairs was notified that the tribe would talk over the matter with Our Grandfather's (the President's) representatives, provided that Fisher Hat (George Bird Grinnell) would be one of them.

In due time the three commissioners arrived. There followed a week of oratory and dickering. Two of the commissioners thought that $1,000,000 would be plenty for the strip. Grinnell insisted that the price should be $1,500,000 and at last had his way about it. The treaty was drawn up, signed by the Indians and the commissioners, and later ratified by Congress. Whereupon miners flocked into the Swift Current copper district and began extensive work upon the lodes. To the great satisfaction of some of us they proved, after a couple of years of exploitation, to be of no value whatever.

George Bird Grinnell, in his influential weekly journal *Forest and* 000
Stream, had ever strongly advocated the preservation of Yellowstone National Park as originally defined and had successfully fought certain Wyoming interests that would have despoiled it. On his first trip with me into the St. Mary lakes country in 1885, he had remarked how fine it would be if that part of the Rockies could also some day be set aside as a national park and kept intact as a refuge for big game, a pleasure ground for all of the people for all time to come. He wrote for *Century Magazine* an article describing its mountains, glaciers, and its plentitude of game animals, particularly the mountain goat. Also he interested his close friend President Theodore Roosevelt in the proposal and sent his Chicago representative, Emerson Hough, out to see that section of the Rockies and write about it for *Forest and Stream.*

It was on a blustery day in February, 1902, when Joseph Kipp, William Jackson, and I met Hough at Blackfoot station and escorted him down to Kipp's home for the night. Both Jackson and I well knew him, we having been with him in Chicago and at several annual Sportsmen's Exhibitions in Madison Square Garden, New York.

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He had a fine, firm face and big, honest, eager eyes. He wore a plain 727
buckskin shirt and leggings, quilled moccasins of Crow design, bow-and-arrows case at his shoulder. His hair was neatly combed in Crow fashion. Surely a Crow, I thought. But as the stern of the boat grated upon the shore, he surprised me by saying in perfect Pikuni-Blackfoot: "Oh, white man! Generous white man! I am a Pikuni man. I seek my Pikuni people. Can you tell me where they are?"

"They will arrive here today to camp and trade. I live with them. I came on ahead, my woman and I, last night. Get in. We will cross," I answered.

He shoved the boat out, springing in, and said, "Oh, Sun is good to me; he has helped me to survive the many dangers so that today I shall meet my own people."

"Who are you?" I asked.

"I am Three Bears," he proudly answered. "White man, perhaps you knew my father, Running Wolf, killed by the Crows when I was a young one of five winters; and if you knew him, you knew my mother, Red Bird Woman, a Crow slave since that time, and now—*haiya!*—but recently dead!"

"Let me think . . . . Yes, I do remember them. We were camped on Bear River. They were of a small party that went off to hunt. We never saw, never heard of them again," I answered.

"Are any of their close relatives—my close relatives—still living?"

"Yes. Your father's brother, Black Eagle; your mother's brother, Little Otter; several women."

"Oh, good! Good!" he cried. "My mother often told me of them." And then, pointing: "They must be my people, there coming down off the plain."

It was the long caravan of the Pikunis, chiefs in the lead, heading 648
for the fort. There were two thousand men, women, and children 439
riders; several thousand pack horses; more thousands of loose horses; [484]
countless wolflike dogs. We landed, hurried to the entrance of the fort where Beaver Child, in brass-buttoned, blue-cloth uniform, sword at his side, waited with his many *engagés* to greet the on-coming chiefs. The cannon in the east bastion boomed a welcome to [727]
them; they answered by firing many guns. All in their war clothes, [292]

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727 singing a peace song, they neared us, and Three Bears, close at my
[648] side, breathed hard as he stared at them with eager eyes.

[439] "Oh, white man! I feel queer, poor, inside me. You tell them who
[292] I am," he gasped. "Yes. Wait," I answered.

[533] The chiefs, noting his roached-up hair, glared at him as they came on and got off their horses; kept looking back at him as they moved on to be welcomed by Beaver Child. Biding my time, I grasped the young man's arm, led him forward, and said to them: "Chiefs, this is Three Bears, son of Running Wolf and Red Bird Woman. From the Crows he has just now come."

For a little, puzzled, thinking back, they stared at him; then loudly, happily exclaiming, they came hurrying to welcome him, excitedly hugging him, questioning him, claiming him as their own. Word of his arrival reached the people making camp just below the fort, and came running his relatives and almost smothered him with their embraces. Each uncle, each aunt, wanted him for his, for her, very own, to make a son of him, and they quarreled, were very bitter to one another until Chief Big Lake turned to them and said: "Now, now, be not fire-heads. You all know that Black Eagle, his father's own brother, has best right to him."

None could deny that, and after a little Three Bears, all but overcome by their friendliness, managed to say: "At last to be here with you all, oh, what happiness for me. I want to be close to you, my relatives."

That evening Big Lake called a meeting of the chiefs in his lodge to hear Three Bears tell of his years with the Crows, and I was present. Sadly, so low voiced that we could barely hear him, he began his tale but soon became loud and fierce as he told of the wrongs that he had suffered from some of them.

"My mother often told me that I was five winters old and the only little one of the party of seven men and five women who went out from Bear River to hunt that day," he began. "With my mother and the other women I watched the men run a big herd of buffalo and kill many. We then rode on to help them butcher their kills. All were at work—my father and mother were at work on a cow when suddenly many enemies came riding out from a coulee and shooting

721 Kills Many: "Buffalo. They wander far south, far north, far east, far west. They belong to all of the different peoples. We Crows follow them, kill them to supply our needs."

Big Lake: "You have no right to camp and hunt in this, the country of us Pikunis, and our brothers, the Blackfeet, and the Many Chiefs (the Bloods)."

Kills Many: "We do not admit that this is your country. It is our country."

Big Lake: "Three summers back, where Yellow (Judith) River flows into Big (Missouri) River, we made an agreement, a writing
[130] with men Your and Our Grandfather sent out to us.[2] They agreed and so wrote it on their big, white, square leaves that all of the plains and mountains from the country of the Red Coats south to South Bear (Musselshell) River was the country of our three tribes. They put their names to it. We put our names to it. You Crows were there. You heard all of the talk. You did not object, you did not even speak, yet now you say that this is your country."

Kills Many: "We were alone there. Against your three tribes it would have been useless for us to speak."

Big Lake: "You fully know that this is our country, that you have no right here. But our women are begging us to pity your women and children and not fight you."

726 Quickly Three Bears turned that into Crow and then excitedly said to Big Lake: "Chief, one of those there sitting is my enemy, Long Elk. I want to fight him; I must fight him, kill him." And as he said
[201] that he also signed it so that the Crows could understand. And at once

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175 [2] The "Stevens" treaty with the Blackfoot tribes at the junction of the Missouri and Judith rivers, October, 1855, was later ratified by Congress. It stipulated
648 that the three tribes were sole owners of all the country from the Canadian line south to Musselshell River, and from the Rocky Mountains between those two boundaries to a north-and-south line cutting the junction of the Missouri and Milk rivers. However, President Grant, by executive order, took from the Indians, without their knowledge or consent, all of the country between the Missouri and the Yellowstone. And later, President Hayes, in a like manner, sequestered their lands between the Missouri and Marias rivers. The "Stevens" treaty, be it remembered, had provided also that the region between the Yellowstone and the Musselshell should be a common hunting ground where all parties to the treaty should enjoy full and equal hunting rights for ninety-nine years.

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CHAPTER FOURTEEN

The White Quiver Saga
(Told by White Quiver)

115 WHEN IN HIS PRIME my long-ago friend *Ksiks Unopachis*–(White
Quiver) was a noted warrior of the Pikunis, largest, most powerful
one of the three Blackfoot Indian tribes. He was born about 1850
and died on the Blackfoot Reservation, Montana, in 1931. He was
very quiet and reserved, seldom joining the gatherings of his story-telling,
[796] laughing, joking, fellow tribesmen around their evening
[555] lodge fires. It was during the annual Medicine Lodge ceremonies
of the tribe, when one by one the warriors counted their coups that
he particularly shone, holding his audience all but breathless as he
told of his raids, his killing of enemies, and his taking of enemy horses.

648 On a night early in September, 1885, a war party of Crows made
721 off with a band of horses owned by some of the Pikunis who were
camped on Badger Creek, not far above their agency. A year previous
to this, following instructions from Washington, the agents
of the various Northwest Indian tribes had notified their charges that
they must absolutely cease going on raids against their enemies. But
now, having himself lost several of his horses in the raid of the night,
White Quiver declared that he cared not for the orders of *Kaahks*
721 *Anon* (Our Grandfather, the President). He was going to take revenge
upon the Crows. Several of the Pikuni warriors wanted to go
[776] with him, but as always he refused their company. He had always
[787] been a lone raider and always would be. His sacred, powerful, secret
helper, a certain animal that had appeared and counseled with him
in his long-ago fasting vision (dream) had told him that to be suc-

726 hidden in the timber during the day, was likely to be discovered by
777 enemies, who would then look for its rider. Well, my visitors soon
[714] left. I slung to my sides my war sack and sacred, slender-cased, war
[411] bonnet, took my rifle, and started off upon the long, southward trail
[533] that I was to follow—my women, as I had ordered, singing the Wolf
Song, good-luck song for the hunter, the warrior, as I left them.

721 Day was near when I arrived at *Osaks Ituktai* (Backfat Creek,
Dupuyer Creek) and went into hiding in its brush for the day. Three
mornings later I came to where Bear River joins Big River (Marias and
[501] Missouri rivers), and there, needing meat, I killed a deer. In the eve-
[481] ning I built a small raft to keep my belongings dry, and, swimming
and pushing it, crossed to Big River's south shore. I was then two
nights in making Yellow (Judith) River, right where we Pikunis had
[136] camped and hunted four winters back. And sad were my thoughts;
then there had been plenty of buffalo on the plains, plenty of deer
● 648 and elk in the mountains. How happy we all had been there until
some white soldiers arrived and said that they were come to move us
[131] back to our own country, to our agency on Badger Creek. Our chiefs
told the soldier chief that we were, right there, in our own country;
that twenty-five winters back, at the mouth of Yellow River, we
had made a treaty with some of Our Grandfather's men, and they
had put into writing the fact that from Elk (Yellowstone) River
north to the Red Coats' country and from the summit of the Back-
bone (Rocky Mountains) between them and east to the mouth of
Little (Milk) River was the country of us Blackfoot tribes. But the
soldier chief said that our chiefs were wrong; that, many winters
back, Our Grandfather had ordered that all of the country from
Elk River north to Bear River was the country of the whites, and
that we would have to pack up at once and return to our agency.
So that we had to do, because we could not fight the many white
soldiers who would attack us, kill off our women and children if
[731] we refused to go. So was it that we never again had buffalo; so was
136 it that, for lack of them, many of our people died. And now there
178 were no more buffalo; the whites had killed them all off. Close above
where I lay hidden in the Yellow River brush were some white men's

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ward, some Black Robes lived. Old Mission, not far below there, was 361
Heavy Shield's camp, and Big Skunk set up his camp of many lodges on Point-of-Rocks River, close to where it flows into Big River.

Came Falling-Leaves Moon and a number of the men of my fath- 721
er's camp and Calf Looking's camp set out to raid the horses of the [648]
Flatheads (Kalispel tribe), going by way of the pass at the head of
Two Medicine Lodges River. There were four who went from Calf [302]
Looking's camp and one of them was Big Snake, he who had the
longest hair of all of our people, men and women. It was gray, and
its braids were so long that they hung down almost to the ground as
he walked. To the right front braid was always tied a white shell in [301]
which were seven holes, they representing the Seven Persons (Ursa [821]
Major), to whom he prayed. In a sun-given vision that he had expe- [782]
rienced they had appeared to him and said they would be his sacred, [776]
powerful helpers. [781]

It was in the Falling-Leaves moon when the war party set out to [533]
raid the Flatheads, and winter had come when the members of it [727]
from my father's camp returned—came charging, singing in with many horses that they had taken from the Flatheads and proudly waving some Flathead scalps. And at once they inquired for the four other members of their party: Big Snake, Yellow Weasel, Cut Finger, and New Robe. Had we seen them or heard of their return? Learning that we knew nothing of them, they went on to say that, soon after they had crossed the Backbone (the Rockies), Big Snake and his three friends had left them; had turned north to raid the Kutenai people, and they wondered what had been their success.

Early morning after the return of the war party, my father told 224
me to round up our horses and catch two of them, his fast buffalo horse, Short Tail, and my favorite horse, Striped Face, for he was going hunting and I was to accompany him and help him butcher his kills.

I soon had the horses tied before our lodge. My mother set food before us. We ate plenty, saddled, and were off, riding southward out upon the plain, expecting soon to sight a herd of buffalo. But none were in sight when we topped the rim of the plain, and we rode on and on, my father repeatedly saying: "Now, this is strange! But

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224 three days ago everywhere out here were herds of buffalo grazing, resting, and now there are none. Nor have our hunters been out this way. Why, then, did the herds leave so suddenly? I don't like it. [787] I believe that it is a warning that danger of some kind threatens us."

"Then let us go back, go home, or hunt north of our camp," I proposed.

"No. We will keep on. Watch carefully ahead for the danger, whatever it may prove to be," my father answered.

We rode on and on, still without sighting a buffalo herd nor even any old, straggling bulls. So going, we came to a large, grassy lake, upon which many flocks of swans, geese, and ducks were resting, feeding, loudly honking and quacking—a flock now and then rising and going on southward toward the Always-Summer-Land.

[821] [776] Said my father: "Those water birds are better off than we are. They can go where Cold Maker cannot follow them, and we have to endure his snow and cold."

"But why can't we all go, too, down into that Always-Summer-Land?" I asked.

"Good reason why we can't: so many tribes of enemies down there that they would kill us off."

721 No sooner had he answered my question when, topping a little ridge just beyond the south end of the lake, we discovered not far ahead a party of men on foot—a war party of some kind, without [201] doubt. And seeing us, one of them stepped aside from the others and signed to us: "Come on. Join us. Smoke with us. Our hearts are good. We will be at peace with you."

"Oh, don't go. They are our enemies. They will kill us," I cried to my father.

Again the man signed to us, this time saying: "Come on. Join us. Smoke with us. We are Crows. We will be friends together."

● [648] Said my father to me: "My son, though they are Crows, our worst enemies, I cannot be a coward. I have to accept their offer, go smoke with them. So come on."

Oh, how frightened I was as we neared those many Crows—fifty-[201] three of them—all well armed, staring solemnly at us. Signed their leader as we came to them and got down from our horses: "It is good

Running Rabbit's lodge. Then soon the rest of us were sitting in 721 Calf Looking's lodge, and his wives were hurrying to prepare food for us. He was filling his big pipe, then passing it to Painted Shield to light. As it went from hand to hand along the row of the Crows, and they began talking to one another, my father said to Calf Looking: "Why are you so few? Where are the others of your band?"

"Three days back they moved up to Shield-Floated-Away River (Dearborn River), there to hunt bighorns."

"Oh that I could have known it so that I could have taken these Crows to my camp instead of to yours. They so many, we so few. I feel that this night may mean the end of all of us."

"But out there where you met them they smoked with you, did they not? And here they are smoking with us. You are needlessly worried for us. Smokers of a peace pipe do not harm the givers of it."

"Were they Flatheads, Kutenais, or other enemies, that would be [648] true. But Crows, our very worst enemies, are different. Well you [186] know what liars they are . . . ."

"But still they would not turn on us after smoking with us. So stop worrying. I am sure that, come morning, these Crows will peacefully go upon their way," Calf Looking ended.

My father just sat quietly, staring at the fire, eating but little when the food was passed to us, taking no part in the sign-talking of the Crows and Calf Looking and several of the men of the camp who had come in to visit and smoke. One of them was Little Otter, whose lodge was the fourth one above us.

Night had come when we finished eating, and Calf Looking again filled his big pipe and passed it for the circle of the gathering to smoke. Then, as Painted Shield was sign-telling of a raid he and some of his friends had made upon a camp of Parted Hairs (Sioux), we were startled by sudden shrieking of women, Little Otter's wives. One of them shouted: "Little Otter, come! Hurry! Your dog, Short Tail, has brought in a fresh scalp . . . ."

Then another wife: "Little Otter! It is the long, shell-tied-to-it hair braid of Big Snake. These Crows surely killed him, hid his scalp here in the snow."

At that, we Pikunis stared questioningly at one another, and, as

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

Three Suns' War Record (Told by Three Suns)

532 Events in the life of *Ninókskatosi*—("Three Suns," otherwise
212 known as "Big Nose"), last war chief of the Pikuni Indians, were por-
[237] trayed by him on an elk skin. This elk skin was given by Big Nose
[127] to Captain L. W. Cooke (later Brigadier General, U.S.A.), Third
[115] United States Infantry, while he was acting Indian agent for the
[624] Blackfoot, Blood, and Pikuni Indians in 1893–94. The following
[657] notes, interpretative of the various pictographs on the skin, were
made by Captain Cooke from verbal descriptions given by Big Nose
himself. At that time Big Nose was about seventy years old.

scene 1 (1870):

● [648] Represents the capture of eight Pondera (Pend d'Oreille) Indians
by the South Piegans, with whom they were at war. A large village
of the Piegans were in camp in the Cypress Hills near old Fort Walsh,
Northwest Territory. The Piegans succeeded in surrounding their
foes and were about to kill them when Big Nose interceded in their
behalf, thus saving their lives and permitting them to return to the
[657] Flathead country from whence they came. It seems that at some pre-
vious time Big Nose had received a large silver medal from the United
States government in Washington; he was told at the time that he
must not kill or permit his people to kill anyone and that he and his
people must make peace with all tribes as well as with the whites,
hence his efforts to save the lives of this party.

24: Schultz F-3 (1877-1947) 1980 NF6 Blackfoot NF6

CHAPTER NINETEEN

Gros Ventre Slaughter[1]
(Told by Big Brave)

SAID MY OLD FRIEND Big Brave to me on a recent evening: "*Apikuni*, 648
how terrible that was, how many men, women, and children were 177
killed after we of the Blackfoot tribes ended our long friendship with the Entrails People (Gros Ventres), warred against them, and all because of a crazy mistake. Why, we became the Entrails People's friends, protectors, long before the white men came into our country to trade with us. The Entrails People came to our very-long-ago [201]
fathers, came crying, and our fathers said to them, in the sign language, of course: 'Who are you? Whence come you? What troubles you?'

" 'We are the Entrails People,' they replied. 'We come from far-downriver country. There the Cutthroats (Assiniboines) became too many for us to fight; we had to flee from them because they were killing us off. We ask you to pity us; let us live in your great plains-and-mountain country.'

"Replied our long-ago fathers: 'Entrails People, we welcome you into our country. Wander in it as you will. Live upon our buffalo. Your enemies are our enemies, and we will join you in fighting them.'

"So it was that we and the Entrails People became close friends in the long ago. Oh, how very saddening it is that we did not always remain so; then how many many lives of the four tribes of us would have been saved. Now, tell me, how long ago was it that the first white men came up into our country and met us?"

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[1] Published in *The Great Fall Tribune* (May 19, 1940).

"Again tell me the number of winters since the white traders were 323
with our long-ago people and saw those dishes."

"It was 175 winters back that he saw the dishes and wrote about them."

"And now our people have no knowledge of it. Why, even my grandfathers and grandmothers did not know that our people once made earth dishes, else I would have heard them tell of it.[2] *Ha!* But
see: There is a song that our women sing to their little ones that may 533
be about those dishes. Listen. This is it: 323 [539]

Ponokahyo, aksa kitahwatop?
(Elk, what do you eat?)

Kahsimi ni tahwatop.
(Sage I eat.)

Ponokahyo, aksa kitsi taiswitan?
(Elk, what dish do you use?)

Okwitok sota nitsi taiswitan.
(Stone dish I do use.)"

He finished, gave me a questioning look, and I said: "They made the dishes of sticky clay, then burned them so that they became very hard, like stone."

"*Ha!* Then the song is surely about those dishes, and we of today do not know it, do not know that our long-ago people made them. We are poor minded; we lose, we forget our past. You whites, how wise you are. You write about the things that you do, you see, and
the knowledge of it is always with you. Well, tell me how long ago 648
it was that that first white trader came to our people."

"*Ha!* It was 183 winters back, and the Entrails People had come [177]
to us for protection before that time. Well, I am of eighty-four winters. I was in my tenth winter when our long friendship with the Entrails People ended."

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[2] It seems strange that Big Brave would not have known of the Blackfoot traditions of pottery-making. Wissler, Kidd, and Ewers all obtained such traditions among the older people. (See John C. Ewers, "The Case for Blackfoot Pottery," *American Anthropologist*, Vol. XLVII, No. 2 (April-June, 1945), 289-99. [113]

648 (In that I knew he was right, for I had learned from the late Joseph Kipp, George Steel, and others that the break between the Blackfoot tribes and the Gros Ventres occurred in the summer of 1863.)

"Well, as I said, it was because of a crazy misunderstanding that our close friendship with the Entrails People ended," my old friend continued. The rest of his tale follows:

[221] [439] Came the New-Grass Moon of summer, and our brother tribes, the Blackfeet and the Bloods, moved north to trade their furs to the whites on North Big River (Saskatchewan). We Pikunis and the Entrails People traded at Many-Houses (Fort Benton); and then the Entrails People moved north and camped on Bear River (Marias), and we Pikunis traveled up Milk River (Teton) and camped on it near Red Old Man's Butte (Priest's Butte).

721 Came from their other-side-of-the-mountain, timbered country, a war party of Kalispels, to raid the horse herds of any camp of us plains people that they could find. Traveling down Bear River and discovering the camp of the Entrails People in the timbered bottom, they lay hidden until dark, then took a large number of their horses and started homeward with them, heading to recross the mountains through Easy Pass (Cadotte Pass). A few of the horses that they had taken were poor and tired, and as they were crossing Milk River, in the night it was, they dropped them, as it happened, close to the camp of us Pikunis. So was it that those tired ones joined a band of our horses that were grazing up on the plain straight out from our camp.

721 648 Came morning, and our men hurried out to round up their horses, drive them to water, and saddle those that they were to use. Three young men went onto the plain for their herds and were surprised to find some strange horses with one of the herds; they were the ones that the Kalispels had let drop out from their stealings. As the young herders were staring at them, wondering whose they were, how they happened to be there, came a party of Entrails men, riding swiftly on the trail of the Kalispels; and, seeing some of their horses there in the herd that the young men were rounding up, they believed that a party of us Pikunis had stolen them. So they killed two

of the young herders. The third one, escaping from them, hurried 721
into camp, shouting that a war party of Entrails People had killed 648
two of his friends. Butterfly was then our head chief. He thought
that the young man was crazy. Our close friends, the Entrails People,
would never attack us, he said.

"But I recognized two of the killers. I know not their names, but I have often seen them in their camp, and visiting in our camp," the young man cried.

Yelled Butterfly: "Well, whoever they are, we have to take after 726
them. Hurry, you fighters, saddle your horses, take up your guns
and we go."

Those who had already brought in their horses were soon ready [701]
to go, and off they rode, a hundred and more of them, Butterfly in
the lead, and they were not long in overtaking some of the Entrails
party, for their horses were tired. They killed five of them, the rest 727
leaving their horses and escaping in heavy timber. They examined 648
their kills; found that they really were Entrails People; even knew
the names of two of them, and Butterfly sadly said: "So ends our long
friendship with the Entrails People. From now on they are as much
our enemies as are the tribes of the Parted Hairs (Sioux). Too bad!
Too bad!"

On that day and for long afterward our Pikuni camp was sad. We
mourned the passing of our two young men, and some of our women
even cried over the ending of their close friendship with women of
the Entrails People. Yes, for a long time there was no happy singing,
drumming, story-telling around our evening lodge fires. At that time
a great warrior was Red Plume, chief of our Raven Carriers society.
Said he one day, as its members were gathered in his lodge: "Well, 648
as the Entrails People are now our enemies, we must make them to [721]
cry. Two nights hence I am starting to raid their camps on Bear [726]
River. Go with me, those of you who are minded." [701]

They were about a hundred who set out with him, and they went [492]
afoot, vowing that they would return riding horses of the Entrails
People. They did not find the camp of the enemy on Bear Creek. As 000
was later proven, they had left the stream, never to return to it. From
that time on they camped and hunted in and around the Wolf Moun-

000 tains (Little Rockies), Lower Little (Milk) River, and from there south of Big (Missouri) River to Elk (Yellowstone) River."

● 648 Following the trail of the Entrails People[A] from Bear River, Red
721 Plume and his party discovered them camped just north of Hairy
726 Cap (east butte of the Little Rockies), and that night they killed a number of them and took more than three hundred of their horses. From that time on war parties of our Blackfoot tribes frequently raided the Entrails People, and they in turn sometimes raided our camps and horse herds but did us little harm. Not long after we fell out with them they made a peace smoke with the Crows, who were also our bitter enemies.

Came the third summer of our hatred of the Entrails People (1866); Butterfly had died, and in his place, Many Horses became head chief of us Pikunis. The head chief of the Entrails People was Sitting
[623] Woman—a strange name for a man. Well, in the Green-Grass Moon
[782] of that summer, Many Horses counciled with our medicine men and
[796] foremost warriors, and they decided that we should make our great, every-summer offering to Sun[3] this time at Divided Mountains (Cypress Hills, Alberta).

648 Little did we think when we set out for the Divided Hills, in the
721 Berries-Ripe Moon (July) of the summer, that we were there to have a great and successful fight with the Entrails People, and many of their new friends, the Crows. It was not until many winters later, when the white soldiers made us cease fighting one another, that we made peace with those tribes and got their account of the fight.

[103] Arrived at the Divided Hills, we made camp along the edge of a large grove on Seven Persons Creek (Maple Creek), so named because, long before then, a war party of our tribe had killed seven Liars (Crees) there. Well, a war party of Entrails People saw us traveling toward the Divided Hills and hurried back to their camp and told of it.

Then said their chief, Sitting Woman: "The Pikunis love that part of their country. Without doubt they are going there now to build

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[3] The early fur traders named this annual, days-long, sacred ceremony of the Blackfoot tribes "Medicine Lodge; Sun's Lodge." The Blackfoot name for it is *Okan* ("His Vision"). It is their belief that their dreams, to them visions, are their actual experiences as they sleep. [787]

A, [i.e., the Gros Ventres--Analyst]

their great offering to Sun. So is it that we, with our Crow friends 648
here camped with us, will go up there and kill them all off. Yes, and 721
we will have our women go with us, so that they can load our pack horses and travois with all of the valuable belongings of the Pikunis that we can take."

So, Entrails People and Crows, men, women, and children, all of them, set out to put an end to us Pikunis, and upon arriving at the Divided Hills, after consulting with the Crow chief, Sitting Woman sent a few of his men on ahead to look for our camp. Very early that morning, nearly all of our horses had been brought in, watered, and were grazing and resting in our camp and in the near-by long, wide grove of cottonwoods. Advancing cautiously, Sitting Woman's scouts discovered six of our lodges at the lower end of our camp; they could not see the others because of the long grove screening them. As they looked, they saw a boy leave one of the six lodges and head for a band of horses that were grazing on the slope of the valley; stealing up to him, they killed him with bow and arrow, and so silently. Then they turned back to report to Sitting Woman.

"What?" cried he. "Only six lodges? Are you sure there are not more, the many lodges of the Pikunis?"

"Absolutely, there are but six lodges, and we killed a boy that went out from them to get his horses. Come, you yourself, and you will see that we are right," one of the scouts answered, and he started on with them. In due time he saw, as they had said, that there were but six of the Pikuni lodges.

"It must be," he told them, "that the big camp of our enemies is much farther on. Go back, one of you, and tell our people and the Crows to come on. We will kill off these Pikunis here and then cautiously go on, surprise attack the rest of their kind, and put an end to them."

But in the meantime the father of the boy that the scouts had 726
killed, worrying about his long absence, came out looking for him, found him killed, and hurried back to camp with the body, shouting, "Enemies are here; they have killed my son." And just then one named Running Wolf, who had gone out early to look at the valley and hills, came running in and said that many enemies were coming—

727 Rider, little First Rider; he takes an enemy gun; he takes an enemy
702 scalp."

Then how pleased, how proud I was of myself. And I thought, powerful is Sun. Good to me is Sun. I prayed him for a gun, and I have it.

While this was going on some of our party farther up the coulee
[648] had killed the other rider. Both were Atsinas (Entrails men, Gros
Ventres), a tribe with which we had long been at war.

726 We now all got together again, and my father said: "Without
702 doubt these two Atsinas we have killed were early hunters from their
camp. More will be coming from it. It is best that we go to a good
place to conceal ourselves for the day."

We found not far back on our trail a well-timbered coulee, and there had a good rest, our lookouts seeing none of the enemy during the day. Came evening, and my father decided that we would remain right where we were until near morning, then go on very cautiously, looking for more of the enemy to kill. So we lay down to get more sleep, my father at one side of a big rock, Heavy Runner at his other
787 side. Sometime past the middle of the night my father awoke us all
726 by suddenly calling out: "Heavy Runner! Awake! I have had a
702 vision. I must tell you of it."

"Tell it," Heavy Runner grunted, and my father continued: "This I visioned: This big rock here, it nudged me and said, 'Your enemies are camped not far north from here. Be wise. Seek them very cautiously and you will have good luck.' "

"*Ha!* A good vision; a good warning. We will carefully heed it," said Heavy Runner.

Said one lying close to me, "First Rider, your father, Sun powerfully favors him. A good vision, this that Sun gave him. I can hardly wait for the good that is to be ours." We all were so excited about it that from then on we slept but little.

726 When the Seven Persons (constellation of Ursa Major) warned
702 us that day was not far off, we again set out northward, passed the
place where we had killed the two riders; and then, nearer the Divided Mountains, as day came, we stopped in a brushy coulee, and

24: Schultz F-3 (1877-1947) 1980 NF6 Blackfoot NF6

224
555 Came rushing out my father and mother shouting: "You bad boy; where have you been? We have looked all over for you . . . ." Then stopped, stared, and laughed as they saw the tongue and the feather ribs tied to my saddle. And cried my father: "Why, he has been hunting. He has actually made a killing, this strong-minded one of ours. Who was with you? Who took off those feather ribs for you?"

"I was alone. I cut and clubbed them off with my knife and the cow's leg," I explained. And the people gathered around, clapped hands to mouths in surprise, one old man saying: "And he so young, so little and weak. How strange."

"Not strange at all. My son, of course he would be that way," my father proudly answered.

After that no boys made fun of me and my gun.

● 648
721 In the following summer, my ninth one, when we were camped on Little (Milk) River, close north of the Bear Paw Mountains, we learned that there was a large camp of the Lying People (Cree tribe) camping on North Big (Saskatchewan) River right in our country and killing our buffalo. Of all our enemies they were the worst—always coming into our country to hunt our buffalo, we always fighting them, driving them back to their north, swampy country. It was Rising Wolf (Hugh Monroe), that brave, wandering, beaver trapper, married to one of our women, who told us about them.

"The Liars, they have come again to steal our food," our people cried.

726
702 "We will make them to cry," my father shouted, and called upon our brave ones to go against them. Said that I should join the party. We were not many, there on Little River; the greater part of our tribe were camping and hunting on Big (Missouri) River. But seventy-seven of the men in our camp hurried to him, said that they were eager to go with him against the Liars.

[515]
[782]
[778] So again I sat in a sacred sweat lodge with my father and other warriors, listening to Red Eagle's powerful prayers for our success against the Liars and our safe return. In turn I lifted his sacred Thunder Pipe aloft and myself prayed Sun for help in all of my undertakings.

My father, listening, said to me when I finished: "You omitted

Antelope, and the band later amalgamated with 622
the parent Fish Eaters. 621

The Six Mouths, another Fish Eaters' offshoot,
was named when its leader, Good Sun, received 621
a revolver from traders at Fort Edmonton. When 113
he returned to the tribe he said, "The Big White
Chief in the north gave me this gun with six
mouths" (John Low Horn, 1954, pers. comm.). [115]
One Spot became the leader after his father died
and at thirty-one he was the youngest signer of 622
the Canadian treaty.

Similarly, the Many Brown Weasels were always 621
close to the Fish Eaters. The band was [622]
named because its leader, Moon, wore a brown
weasel skin in his hair. [301]

Another Fish Eater affiliate, the Shooting Up,
received its name as a reflection of the disdain
that others had for the group. The leader, Left 622
Hand, had the reputation of being a rebellious 156
and recalcitrant man who would not heed the
dictates of his own tribe. On one occasion, when 622
the Bloods were at peace with the Crees, Left 721
Hand led a small party to attack that tribe. On
his return, he was pursued by infuriated Crees; 648
but when he tried to organize a large force to
attack them, the elders forcibly restrained him. In
anger, Left Hand showed his contempt by firing
his gun in the air. As a result, his followers were 621
dubbed the Shooting Up band. As the name 622
implies, the band was not a popular one and
during the reservation period it was frequently
involved with interband squabbles. In the entire [156]
tribe, the Many Children was considered to be
the most obstinate, with the Shooting Up following
a close second.

The Bear People, another Fish Eaters' offshoot, 621
would likely have qualified as another undesirable 628
band had it survived to the reservation period.
The earliest known leaders were brothers, Many
Shot and Young Sun, and the name was reputedly
given because so many of the members had
the word "bear" in their names, i.e., Going to the
Bear, White Bear, Bear Woman.

During the whiskey trading era in the early 621
1870s, the Bear People were notorious for robbing 674
fellow members of the nation. In about 1872, they 628

[p.101-B]

32: Wildschut E-5 (1923) 1928
NF6 Blackfoot NF6
Piegan
Montana

778 only one example exists among the Blackfeet, as
● [648] the other was captured years ago by the Flatheads, and whether it has been preserved in that tribe is not known.

787 Northern Chief went out one day in the hope
778 of having a vision, and was successful in his quest. In the dream a person appeared and told Northern Chief that he would give him a pipe, warning him, however, to be careful never to allow the pipe to touch the earth nor to permit any woman to touch it. The outer wrapper of the pipe bundle was of albino wolf-skin, while the inner one was black. Northern Chief learned the songs belonging to the bundle, and in his dream it was given to him to carry home. On his way he stopped to drink at a spring and thoughtlessly laid the pipe on the ground. His thirst quenched, he turned to pick up the pipe only to find that it had become a piece of rotten wood. He then awoke.

When Northern Chief returned home he made a pipe exactly like the one seen in the vision. He had been instructed that his pipe should belong only to brave warriors, preferably young and
726 unmarried. The pipe always gave success in war
778 and was used in the capture of the horses of the
[825] enemy. When on the warpath the bundle was
[787] unwrapped, and if a spider should chance to fall

same dream spirit that appeared to Northern 787
Chief appeared also to him. This spirit told 778
Little Dog that he would capture seven guns, and
at some time would become head chief of his
tribe. This actually occurred, Little Dog being [648]
one of the signers, in behalf of the Piegan, of [715]
the treaty between the Blackfeet and the United
States on the upper Missouri, near the mouth of
Judith river, in 1855.

The first owner was authorized to make two
pipes, but no more ever existed among the Black-
feet. The only remaining one, above referred to, [562]
is now owned by a daughter of Mountain Chief;
but as no woman is allowed to handle the bundle,
her father is the actual custodian.

As stated, the Catchers Society pipe bundle is
an entirely different palladium and is much more
elaborate than the Black Wrapped pipe. As [126]
only two specimens of this bundle ever existed
among the Blackfeet, the writer was fortunate in
obtaining one. The following information re- [115]
garding this bundle was given by Split Ears (its
last Blackfoot owner, from whom it was obtained) and from Mountain Chief. The pipe
had its origin so long ago that the name of the
first owner has been lost.

When the first owner of the Catchers Society 787
pipe bundle dreamed about it, the Blackfeet camp 778

575
361

000 in and the sufferings of many were intense, as dejected, hungry and stiffened with cold they retraced the weary one hundred and forty miles to Helena and the other settlements. No lives were lost, but the sufferings of the majority of the deluded band were such as to render it an occasion long to be remembered. Some could not believe it to be a mistake and kept prospecting and suffered severely. While a number of the prospectors were housed at Sun river awaiting the subsidence of the storm to enable them to retrace their steps, they were reduced to great straits for food. Little Dog was then cultivating civilized habits to some extent and was domiciled in a cabin, where, in the summer season, he made some attempts at tilling the soil. When no one else was willing to stir abroad in consequence of the severity of the weather, he made almost daily trips to the bluffs in search of antelope and rarely returned without a supply of meat. Retaining only enough for his own use, he furnished the remainder to the snowbound prospectors and thus relieved their pressing necessities. X. Beidler was among the number thus benefited and it is he who narrated this anecdote to the author and he still cherishes grateful recollections of Little Dog's hunting prowess and benevolence in this time of trial.

BLACKFOOT WAR WITH THE WHITES

175
648 Father Imoda thinks my introduction to the war between the whites and Blackfeet substantially correct. He says the state of affairs could not at any period be properly regarded as war, as no general operations were attempted by the Indians.

The real trouble began when a party of Blood Indians destroyed a party of nine white men and one negro at the mouth of the Marias on May 25, 1865. This event produced a great deal of excitement throughout the territory, and Governor Meagher called for the organization of a militia company to defend the frontier and punish the Indians. It took post at Fort Benton, but such was its composition that it did little but annoy the inhabitants by its extortions. It had marched with high vauntings and was wont

175 to levy at will upon whatever fell in its way that took its
648 fancy, repaying the plundered victim by promises of protection
from Indian outrage. The company gradually
dwindled down to some forty men with John Morgan in
command, who, upon his own responsibility, marched with
this remnant into the Blackfoot country, not to chastise
728 the Indians, but to have a bout at peace making. This
175 display of force rendered the Indians as anxious for peace
648 as the militia were and a council was held. Malcolm
[682] Clarke had tendered his services as interpreter and pacificator.
He listened to the speeches of the Indians, who,
[186] in conformity with their custom of indemnifying a murder
with presents to his relatives, offered to atone for the massacre
on the Marias by presenting to the whites a horse
for each of the men there killed, excepting the negro, whom
they did not regard it proper to notice. Clarke interpreted
the speeches to suit himself, and the answers to the Indians
likewise, and when the proceedings terminated with the
formal ratification of peace, Clarke announced to his companions
that the Indians had presented the horses to himself
in token of their appreciation of his good offices in
restoring them to a footing of friendship with the whites.
It did not transpire till long after that what the Blood
Indians had really intended by the gift of the ten horses.

175 But whatever good Morgan may have done for the
648 frontier by this bit of peace-making he effectually nullified
the following winter. A party of four Piegan warriors
visited his house in the Sun river valley and were received
with apparent kindness. It chanced that a party of prospectors,
numbering eleven men, was then camped in the
vicinity and some of whose members had indulged in bombastic
bravado and boastings directed against the Indians
whom they might encounter in their gold-seeking rambles.
Morgan, leaving the four Indians in his house, went to
this camp and told them that there was a chance now to
put some of their threats into execution, as there were four
Piegans in his house. This announcement was hailed with
satisfaction. The party proceeded at once to the house,
made prisoners of the Indians, who offered no resistance,

175 and promptly proceeded to execute them by hanging. On
648 their way to the fatal tree, about a mile and a half from
Sun River Crossing, one of the Indians drew a concealed
knife, and, cutting at one of the guard, attempted to
escape, but he was instantly shot by one of the guard
posted behind him. The remaining three were hanged.
Unknown to the executioners there were five Piegan warriors
who witnessed the fate of their unfortunate comrades
in whose company they had come to the neighborhood.
721 They flew with the tidings to their tribe and the fire of
175 revenge was kindled. A numerous body proceeded to attack
648 the agency buildings on Sun river, appearing before
them in March or April, 1866. They lay in concealment
and ambuscaded and killed one of the employees while
going for water to the river, but the other defended himself
successfully from the houses, which were so arranged
as to present the appearance of a fort. At length it was
fired on by the Piegans and the flames, communicating
with a keg of powder, an explosion ensued that scattered
the roof in fragments and carried consternation among the
besiegers, who precipitately fled. The resolute defender was
fortunately uninjured by the explosion and took advantage
of the confusion to conceal himself in the thickets of the
valley and subsequently escaped to the Dearborn ranch.

Other murders rapidly followed and the war thus precipitated only terminated with Baker's battle in January, 1870.

After the hanging of the Indians a fear of the consequences and shame for its dastardliness and cowardice fell upon the guilty perpetrators. Morgan soon found himself alone with his family in his house in Sun river valley. Morgan was the only settler and had gone there in the fall or winter and occupied a place where Little Dog had formerly made a feeble attempt at civilized life. It was about three miles below Sun River Crossing. His intention was to build a bridge and he was occupied in doing it when the trouble occurred. His provisions were swept away and the project was discontinued.

Not daring longer to remain in this exposed position he

721 sent his wife and children for protection to the Old Mis-
175 sion and betook himself to Helena. Immediately after the
648 destruction of the agency, the Indians proceeded to Morgan's house but found it deserted. A plain track, however, showed whither his wagon had gone, and, following it, the Indians were enraged to find that it led to the Missouri river and whence they presumed that Morgan had sought shelter at the Old Mission and been admitted.

A blow against the mission was, therefore, resolved upon, and, lying in ambush, they waited the coming of a victim. A man named Fitzpatrick, who had been employed at the Missouri as a herder some twenty days before, was the first who appeared, who, unsuspecting danger, was searching for his cattle. He walked into the trap and was killed. When he failed to return to the house, he was sought for and his body found. The Indians were seen skulking in the vicinity but soon left and proceeded to the Dearborn river, where, half a mile from his ranch, they killed Charles Carson.

(The Blood Indians say that the whites themselves precipitated the attack at the mouth of the Marias that resulted so disastrously. One or two of their number, leaving the main body, went forward to where the whites were felling timber, and, being rudely received, even threatened with leveled guns, fled with their story to their comrades, who, enraged, surrounded the party and cut them to pieces, letting not one escape.)

(See also "War with the Blackfoot Bands," Bradley manuscript, Vol. 8 of Contributions.)

CHARACTERISTICS, HABITS AND CUSTOMS OF THE BLACKFEET INDIANS

Fires

372 The Blackfeet formerly made fire by rubbing together two pine sticks. It was very laborious and they took great pains to prevent the fire from going out, carrying it with them on the march.

796 standing with the offerings to the sun attached to the
[782] pole. These are designed to remain until they perish by
the action of the elements, but frequently the medicine lodge is visited by prowling enemies, who despoil it of all its gifts. That they may occasionally disappear through other agencies would seem to be a fair conclusion from the following facts:

[177] The Piegan sun dance of the year 1832 was witnessed
[175] by some of the white employees of the then recently established post of the American Fur Company, Fort McKenzie.
175 Among the other gifts sacrificed to the sun was one of
648 those rare freaks of nature—a white buffalo robe—so rare,
[782] indeed, that probably they do not average more than one to
[435] the million. They are, therefore, extremely valuable and
the white spectators to the offering resolved in secret that this rare treasure should not be left to share the fate of its companion gifts. They bided their time till the ceremonies were at an end, and when the assemblage broke up departed like the rest, turning their faces toward the fort. They traveled slowly, however, and when night came were at no great distance from the lodge. Going into camp they waited until the night was sufficiently advanced to conceal their movements from any watchful eye, when they rapidly retraced their steps to the lodge. Regaining it they first carefully reconnoitered the ground and then entering carefully sought the suspended robes. The pole was loaded with the various gifts, but in vain the eager hands sought to clutch the coveted robe. It was gone! Someone had anticipated them, and, greatly crestfallen, the party returned to their camp and the next day continued their journey to the fort.

What had become of the robe? That is uncertain, but one thing is sure—it was never afterwards seen in the Blackfeet camps. But it would seem that Catlin supplies us with the means of arriving at a solution of the mystery. In that year he visited Fort Union, proceeding in the fall to the Mandan villages, where the present Fort Berthold
[439] stands. He records in his book that while there word came
that a party of Blackfeet Indians had arrived at Fort

175 Union, bringing with them for sale a white buffalo robe.
439 It seems that at that time the Mandans were desirous of
● 648 making a sacrifice of unusual costliness, and a council was
at once called to consider the propriety of securing this robe. It was decided to do so and the means were provided with which to effect the purchase, consisting of eight of their best horses bearing goods of a value exceeding that of the horses. These were dispatched to Fort Union, the Blackfeet were still there with their treasure, the price was accepted, and ere long the wonderful robe was on exhibition in the lodge of the principal chief of the
175 Mandans. In due time after public curiosity was gratified
648 by its inspection, the robe was consecrated by the medicine
men and attached to a pole over the Mandan medicine lodge, where, according to the custom of the tribe, it probably remained until it disappeared from decay.

It can not certainly be said that this robe and the one that disappeared from the Blackfoot medicine lodge are identical, but we think that few of our readers will hesitate to arrive at that conclusion.

SONGS

533 The songs of the Blackfeet had no words but existed in great variety. They were scarcely to be called monotonous, as they possessed quite a range of notes and varied greatly in expression from the lowest articulation to the most vociferous yells. They were, however, unmusical to civilized ears.

SCALPS

727 When scalps were taken they were turned over to the
535 squaws upon the arrival of the war party at the village, to
[462] be prepared for the scalp dance. This was done by stretching
each scalp upon a hook, the hook being then attached to a small pole, six or eight feet long, a separate pole for each scalp. Each pole is borne by a squaw, usually a relative of the warrior who took it, who leads in the dance, the warriors and squaws all arrayed in their best attire following her in single file in a circle of a size proportioned to the number of dancers. The step of the dance is

721 [728] negotiation for peace, they seem incapable, as a rule, of that higher diplomacy which has for its difficult object the soothing of the hate and irritation which threatened to precipitate two hitherto friendly peoples into a state of war. A striking and unfortunate illustration of this fact will be found further on in our history when we treat of the rupture, after centuries of good feeling, between the Gros Ventres and the Blackfoot bands. The Blackfeet had a convenient custom of regarding every tribe not included in their confederation as enemies, and waged incessant war against them. These will be spoken of more at length hereafter.

721 171 But lest the reader should be misled as to the meaning of the word war when applied to the state of chronic hostilities existing between Indian tribes we will pause to explain it more at length. It has by no means the same signification as when applied to the beligerent attitude of civilized states, where the whole power of the nation is exerted to force the adversary to the wall and conquer an early and permanent peace. It is improbable that a single instance could be sighted within the whole range of history of such conduct of a war upon the part of any Indian tribe of the western plains. These tribes are at war simply when upon killing or horse stealing terms, and the war is carried on solely by insignificant bands of restless or ambitious warriors who are willing to skulk for days or weeks in ravines or mountain fastnesses or lurk in the thickets of streams, enduring hunger, cold, heat, and toil, and every hardship for the opportunity occasionally afforded to take the scalp of some unfortunate straggler or drive off a band of unprotected horses. It is rare that a battle of any consequence takes place, and when it does it is more frequently the result of accident than of design.

648 721 171 Each tribe of the Blackeet had its pet enemies, to whom it principally devoted its warlike attentions. Thus the Bloods usually sought out the Crows, the Piegans carried their arms against the Flatheads and the Nez Perces, the Blackfeet fought the same tribes, while the valor of the Gros Ventres was mainly directed against the Crows. All cordially hated the Assinniboines, and fought them wherever

● 648 encountered, but seldom made them a special object of
721 attack. The several tribes usually carried on their wars
[171] alone, but sometimes sought co-operation for defensive purposes
or to undertake some enterprise of unusual magnitude.
When such an alliance was desired, the tribe asking assistance
despatched an envoy, charged with the message and a
quantity of tobacco, to the tribe whose co-operation was
desired. Upon the arrival of the envoy at his destination,
he announced his errand, when a council was called to
hear it more in detail. Presenting his tobacco, the envoy
then interpreted in a speech what the tobacco said, which
was the message he had been instructed to deliver. The
council then deliberated upon the propriety of complying
with the request; if a favorable answer was to be returned
they smoked the proffered tobacco, by which they obligated
themselves to do all in their power to forward the cause
of their allies; if they declined their assistance, the tobacco
701 was returned unused. Payment for such assistance was
721 rarely tendered among the Blackfeet and never demanded.
When the individual sought the assistance of friends to redress
private wrongs a similar method of procedure was
employed, but in this case a reward was usually proffered
and accepted if the services were rendered.

Peace

728 Peace was made only by the chiefs and soldiers in formal
622 council.

Societies

575 Among the Blackfeet there were no organization analogous
701 to our secret societies, but two fraternities existed
which though small in numbers and importance demand
notice. The first is the Dog Band, or The Dogs, a military
association whose creed is never to flinch in battle. It is
composed of young men distinguished for courage and address
in war, but its obligations and practices render it unpopular
and it seldom numbers more than fifty persons. It
indulges at intervals in a begging tour of the village, entering
at will into any lodge, dashing about on all fours, yelping
[431] and catering in imitation of a dog. The Dog is only to

lodges. Were there ever upon these 133
rocks writings done by the hands of 172
white men, time has long since obliterated them. Passing up the river one 212
mile we encamped, having made today
only 20 miles, but our Guide says there
is no wood or water for a long day's 122
march beyond. 133

Tuesday, Sept. 4th. Passed from the river valley to a high, level plain of different character from that on the South
of Milk River. The soil is a sandy loam; 134
the grass although very short, forms a
heavy turf & the Prickly Pear has disappeared. 137
Pursuing our course due N., true, in 20 miles came to a Lake 6 miles long by two broad. Its shores are gravelly and water clear, but I named it "Stinking Lake" because at the distance of a mile we perceived from it an offensive odor of Carburetted Hydrogen Gas.
The Indians call this *Pah-kah-kee*, or Unlucky Water, 103
from having lost a number of horses when encamped here some years since, and they thought the water killed them.[5] Our Indians and the horses, however, drank of it and experienced no
bad effects. Here we saw the first Buffalo, 136
and during the afternoon were passing through large bands.

We rode rapidly hoping to make Belly river[6] where the Lodges are supposed to be, but at 7 P.M., having travelled 55 miles, we halted at a small pool of rain water.

Wednesday, Sept. 5th. Night and morning cloudy and cold. Pushing on, at 12 miles we struck *Mo-ko-un* or Belly river,

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[1] *Sweetgrass Hills, just south of the International Boundary and east of Coutts.*

[2] *Little Dog was a Peigan chief and leader of the* 115
Black Patched Moccasins band. After Lame Bull's
death he was recognized as head chief of the tribe 622
but was murdered by his own people in 1866.

[3] *This refers to a number of horses which were*
stolen from the Flathead Indians while they were
visiting Governor Stevens. The governor had 648
promised the Indians they would be returned.

[4] *This is the earliest known reference to Writing-on-*
Stone. The site, about 20 miles east of Milk River 172
town, is preserved as a provincial park.

[5] *This is Crow Indian Lake, 10 miles south of Skiff.* 121
The word "Pakowki" means Bad Water and is now applied to a larger lake south of Medicine Hat.

[6] *The river below the confluence of the Belly and*
Oldman had been called the Belly until surveyors 133
found that the Oldman was actually the larger stream. Since then, the river downstream has been called the Oldman.

about 15 miles above its junction with 133
Bow river. The stream is here 150 yards
wide, and is deep with a current of 4 122
miles per hour. Water clear and cold.
The shores are gravelly & sloping. The
River is subject to an ordinary rise of
10 feet, and to extraordinary freshets of
40 feet as shown by the pine drift-wood
scattered over the valley. There is no
timber on the river for some distance
above and below this point.

Having breakfasted, we were again
moving. Our Indians declared, from
traces they could discover, that the
Camps were up the River and accordingly
we pushed rapidly in that direction.
In eight miles crossed the River at a
shallow ford and in 15 miles more came
in sight of Indians on the opposite side
moving up. Crossed and learned that 621
it was the South Piegan camp, under the
lead of the Lame Bull[7] who was en- 175
camped some distance above. Learned 622
also that Mr. Bird[8], whom I relied upon
as an Interpreter, was with the Lame 114
Bull,[9] and that the Flathead horses, re-
cently stolen, had this day been brought 124
to this camp. I did not stop at the first
lodges, but pushed on to have an inter-
view with the head chief. In some ten 124
miles came in sight of the upper camp. 175
The Lame Bull and Mr. James Bird came
out to meet me, and the Chief invited us 622
to his Lodge. 361

In accordance with your instructions
I immediately secured the services of Mr.
Bird as Interpreter. The principal chiefs
were at once assembled and I stated to
them that the Commissioners to hold the 123
Blackfoot Council had sent me to confer 618
with all the Blackfoot and invite them to 685
be present at the Council. I would give 175
them full information concerning the
council, but there was another matter
to be spoken of first. It was this. Two
of their young men had stolen four
horses from some Flat Heads who were
coming to make a treaty of peace with
the Blackfoot, and who were on a visit
to the Commissioners at Fort Benton at
the time the horses were stolen. These
were stolen from the Soldier Chief's band
of horses, where they had been placed
by his direction, & he regarded them as
his own.

[p.20-A]

The Commissioners, or Soldier Chiefs, did not think the Blackfoot Chiefs intended to countenance such conduct on the part of their young men, but that they desired to keep good faith with the Indians who came to the Council, and therefore they had sent me for the horses, presuming that they would be delivered up without hesitation. 123 648 685 175

I then reminded the Chiefs that I had been a long time in their country; that we had always been good friends; that they had never stolen the horses left in my charge, nor those of my Indian friends who came to visit me, and I did not think they would be less friendly now. I believed the Chiefs would set this matter right; and I now asked them to take the stolen horses now in their camp, and deliver them to me to be sent to the Fort. I did not wish them to purchase the horses from those who had them, but to seize them, and say to the 648 175 685

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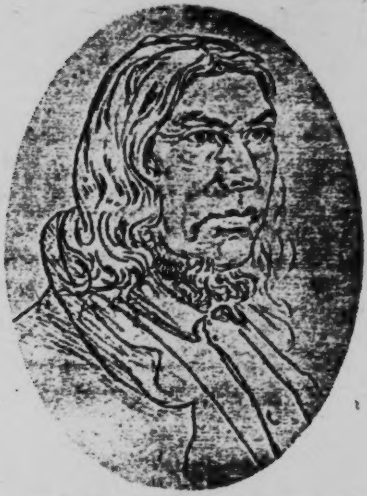
[7] *Lone Bull, or Lone Chief, was leader of the Hard Topknots band and signed the 1855 treaty as head chief of the Peigan tribe. He was killed in a buffalo stampede two years later.* [622] [224]

[8] *James Bird, Jr., was a mixed blood son of a Hudson's Bay Co. factor and began working for the Company in the Edmonton district in 1810. He became an Assistant Trader in 1814 but left the firm during the 1820's to become a free trader. In 1831 he was engaged by the American Fur Co. to draw the Peigans south to trade on the Missouri but the H.B.Co. succeeded in winning him back as a Clerk late in 1833. During the next few years, although employed by the British, rumors were current that he was also receiving money from the Americans.* [114] [115] [159]

He left the company again in 1841, the same year he had a dispute with Rev. R. T. Rundle, Methodist missionary, and refused to interpret for him. Four years later, Father Jean De Smet engaged him at Fort Edmonton but Bird deserted him on the trail. Paul Kane, the artist, found Bird in charge of Rocky Mountain House in 1848 and, unlike the missionaries, considered him to be a hospitable and trustworthy man. After serving as interpreter for James Doty, Bird went to Fort Benton to interpret at the 1855 treaty. Six years later, and an old man by western standards, he was living in retirement in Red River settlement. By 1877, however, he was back in Blackfoot country herding horses with his brother. Because of his reputation, he was brought to Blackfoot Crossing in that year to interpret at Treaty No. Seven.

In the spring of 1885, Bird was old and blind and living with some Crees and Metis near Buffalo Lake, Alberta. When Riel Rebellion broke out, he moved to the Blackfoot Reserve for two or three years and in 1889 went to the Peigan Reserve. By the following year he was on the Blackfeet Reservation in Montana where he died in 1892 at the age of 107 years.

[p.20-B]



James Bird, Jr., known as Jimmy Jock Bird, was the interpreter for James Doty on his 1855 trip. For a biography of this controversial figure, see Footnote No. 8. 114 115 159

young men, "You may steal, but you shall not keep what you steal, in this camp." 618 175 685

The Chiefs replied that the matter would be attended to, and the Council adjourned until tomorrow, when I propose talking to them concerning the Great Council.

In the evening the Lame Bull informed me that three of the horses had been given up, and were in the hands of the Little Dog. The fourth horse had been taken by the man who stole it, to the North, and he thought could not be recovered, therefore in place of it he gave the Flat Heads a good horse of his own, which would be brought to me in the morning.

I accepted invitations to the Lodges of several Chiefs, among whom was the "Star Robe"*, a great Gros Ventre Chief, who had abandoned his people to live with the Piegans. 123 162 175

Thursday, Sept. 6th. The Indian camp numbering some 280 Lodges are scat- 621 361 175

[P. 21-A]

175

tered along the River for a distance of 621
12 miles. They consist of about 200 361
lodges of South Piegans and 80 lodges
of North Piegans & Blackfeet. The Lame [162]
Bull's camp of 62 lodges was about the
centre, and here I invited the principal
chiefs to meet me. At 10 A.M. they had 123
assembled, and I stated to them fully 622
the object of my visit. The Chiefs names
are as follows, and they rank as they 175
are placed, viz, 1st, 2nd, 3rd, etc.

The Lame Bull Mountain Chief Middle Sitter The Iron Shirt Kitch-e-pone-istah[10] Heavy Shield The White Bull	South Piegans excepting the Mountain Chief, a North Piegan.
The Fox	Blood Indian.
The Star Robe[9] The Iron Flag	Gros Ventres now joined with the Piegans. [563] [162]

And there were present twenty-two other Chiefs and head men.

It is presumed to be unnecessary to 728
state in detail my remarks to the 175
Indians. The Council, the benefits accruing to them in case they made a Treaty and faithfully observed its stipulations, and the necessity that all the Blackfeet who hunt or trade on American soil should be present at the Council, were fully explained.

The question was put to them—after 648 ●
stating the proposition of bringing the 728
Crow Indians into the Council—whether
they would guarantee them safety in 175
person and property. They were made to understand that the persons and property of all the Western Indians who visited the Council, were under the protection of the Commissioners, who looked to the chiefs of the Blackfoot Nation to prevent their young men from injuring

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[9] *Star Robe was considered to be the wealthiest Indian among the Gros Ventres. He signed treaties with the American government in 1855, 1865 and 1868.* [563] [161]

[10] *Spotted Calf. This may have been the chief who signed Treaty No. Seven in 1877 under the name of Running Rabbit. He was of mixed Peigan and Blood background and, after living with the Bloods until 1882 he moved permanently to Montana.* [622]

[p.21-8]

those Indians in any manner, and, in case they should, to make full compensation therefor. 648 728 135

They were directed to recognize Mr. Bird as United States Interpreter and to place confidence in what he should say to them on the part of the Commissioners. 554 114

They were requested to make arrangements to collect at "The Writings", on Milk River, in 12 days from this time, and appoint the place they would move to, within five days of the Fort, where a messenger could meet them with news of the time and place of holding the Council. They were recommended to continue hunting in the meantime, and supply themselves amply with meat.

In reply, the Chiefs unanimously expressed great satisfaction at what they had heard. They were glad to hear these things from an old friend because now they could believe them. Were willing to meet the Crows and try and make Peace with them, would pledge themselves for their safety, and that they should go home on as good horses as they came on. The same with regard to the Western Indians. 123

They would collect at the "Writings", as I proposed, and move slowly to Maria's River, whence they could easily reach the Fort in five days. They were glad to have Mr. Bird as an Interpreter, because he spoke their language well and they had confidence in him. They already had a good supply of meat, but would make more so as to give some to the "Soldier Chiefs", the Forts and other Indians who were poor. The Chiefs then said they wished to inquire concerning some bad stories that had been told them and which had given them much trouble. The following appears to be the substance of the most important one.

When the Piegans, Bloods, Blackfeet and Gros Ventres were encamped together near the Cypress Mountains", some time in July last, intending so to remain until the period of holding the Blackfoot Council and attend it in a body, some Blood Indian warriors came from Forts Benton and Campbell to the camp and stated that a white man at one of the Forts had told them that three boats were coming up the River loaded with goods. Two boat loads were for the purchase of all the lands of the Blackfoot Nation. Their lands and hunting grounds south of the Missouri River would be given to the Flat Heads, Pends Oreilles and Nez Perces for a home, and the remaining boatload of goods as presents. All the rest of the Blackfoot country the whites wished for themselves and would require the Blackfeet to move north beyond the Saskatchewan, not permitting them to come into this country to hunt or trade. 648 728 175

This story was much debated upon by the Chiefs of the combined camps and ended in the breaking up of the camp, the dispersing in various directions of the Bloods, Piegans and Blackfeet and a determination on the part of many of them not to go to a council where that would be required of them which they would never assent to. The Chiefs anxiously inquired if this were true.

I assured them that there was no truth in it whatever, and reminded them that I had often told them not to believe any stories they heard from the Forts concerning Government business. The Commissioners did not employ the people at the Forts to tell the Indians what kind of a Treaty they wished to make; they sent messengers to speak directly to the Indians. Now, all the Indians were requested to come to the Council and hear from the Commissioners themselves what the President wished the Indians to agree to, and what he was willing to do for them, provided they listened to his advice.

The Indians expressed much pleasure at hearing this explanation and said their path was now straight to go to the Council and take the advice of the "Great Soldier Chief"—meaning the President, and the Council then adjourned.

Having concluding my business here, & learning that there was a large camp of Indians on Bow River—supposed to consist of all the Bloods and 120 Lodges 122 175 [621]

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[11] *Cypress Hills, in south-western Saskatchewan and south-eastern Alberta.*

[TEXT CONTINUED ON PAGE 23-B]

on the opposite side 90 Lodges Blood 175
Indians, 70 North Piegans and 20 Black- 621
feet and the whole Camp had appointed
tomorrow as the day for breaking up 361
Camp and moving North in search of [162]
Buffalo, as there are none here and the
Indians are "starving".

The main Camp of Blood Indians— 175
some 200 Lodges—have not been heard 361
from since they parted from this camp
at the Cypress Mountain, but are sup- [162]
posed to be moving towards the Three
Buttes to join the Lame Bull.

In the evening I had a Council with 123
the Indians on this side at which several
chiefs from the opposite side were pre- 175
sent. The same remarks, in substance,
were made to them as to the Piegans, 648
and in reply they expressed much plea-
sure at what they heard and promised
to come to the Council if the Camps
opposite would do so. Several invita- 123
tions were given me and among others
I visited the Chief Talker's Lodge, a 175
principal Blackfoot Chief. 574

This Indian had a small keg of
whiskey—as he styled it—which he ob- 175
tained from a party of Indians who had
been to the British Post, Edmonton House, 273
to trade, and had this day returned with 574
a supply of rum and many Indians in
the camp opposite were drinking to ex- [439]
cess. He gave me a few drops of this
"whiskey" to taste, and to me it seemed
like the rinsings of a barrel in which
might have been rum at some very
ancient date.

Returning to High Bull's Lodge, we found that he had deserted it to cross the river and get drunk.

Saturday, Sept. 8th. Borrowed a strong 122
horse and with Mr. Bird crossed Bow
river. The ford is 300 yards wide, the 175
water very swift and so deep as to run
over our saddles for some distance. As [133]
we approached the Lodges, several
Chiefs met us and we accompanied the 175
"Eagle Flag" to the lodge of the "Big
Painted Lodge". These two are the lead- 622
ing chiefs of this camp of Blood Indians." 576
Some thirty of the head men were al-
ready assembled and I at once laid
before them the wishes of the Commis- 175
123
648

[p.24-A]

sioners. They discussed matters at great length, some adhering to their determination to go North, and others wishing to attend the Council. I urged upon them earnestly the propriety and necessity of going to the Council, etc., etc. and they finally agreed to move tomorrow towards Fort Benton and collect at "The Writings" by the 25th September.

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Next visited the "Spotted Eagle", a Blackfoot Chief. He has with him ten lodges and will come to the Council. The Morning Star, with ten lodges will not come. The Bull's Head, with 70 lodges, North Piegans, goes North.[12] He said he was very sorry he could not do as the "Soldier Chiefs" wished. He would like to go to the Council, but there was an old quarrel between himself and the Iron Shirt, a South Piegan, and if they met there would be murder committed. He did not wish to be engaged in fighting at the Council, because, if once commenced, it might not stop with those who began it and therefore he would not go. He was friendly to the Americans and would keep Peace if the Nation made one. The Flathead horse I had come for had been stolen by one of his young men and brought to his camp. He, the Chief, had taken the horse from the thief and now gave him to me to take to his owner. In the winter he should go to the American Fort to trade, and winter near there.

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[361]
[439]

I next called upon "The Man Who Sits by the Eagle's Tail",[13] chief of a band of 18 Lodges of Blood Indians, called the "Robe Shirts". He said that he was a good friend to the whites and would like to go to the Council, but himself and people were very poor—they had only dogs to move with and could not go so far.

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[162]
[51]
[492]

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[11] *Blood informants say these men were Blackfoot chiefs.*

[12] *The prominent chief met and gave his name to Col. James Macleod when the N.W.M.P. settled at Fort Macleod in 1874. He died during the winter of 1874-75.*

[13] *This man also had the name of White Wolf but was better known as Rainy Chief. He was born in about 1809 and was friendly to the missionaries at a time when most chiefs were hostile. He signed Treaty No. Seven in 1877 as a head chief and died in the following year.*

[551]
[728]

[TEXT CONTINUED ON PAGE 25-B]

pany to the Council Grounds. Since then 175
he had not heard from them, but was 622
sure they were coming to meet him. Two
days ago he had dispatched messengers 202
to find the Blood Camp and expected 628
them to return in two days from this.

On learning this, and after a due 175
consideration of the facts that these
Indians were now on their way to the 121
Council, and therefore it was not im-
peratively necessary for me to see them; 618
that to do so would consume eight or
ten days during which my presence [114]
would be required at the Commissioner's
Office, I determined to proceed tomorrow
to Fort Benton, leaving Mr. Jackson and
Mr. Bird to visit the Blood Indians and
make the necessary arrangements to
secure their attendance at the Council.
Ample verbal instructions were given to 122
Mr. Bird, who thoroughly understands
the views of the Commissioners in rela- 114
tion to the assembling the Indians for
the Council, and also to Mr. Jackson, 175
to whom, in addition, full written instructions
were given.

Tuesday, Sept. 11th. The Little Dog
starts for the Fort this morning and I
have given him charge of the Flat Head
horses. I shall join him, accompanied
by my guide from the Fort. The Lame
Bull wished me to say that the Indians [276]
had no tobacco, and if the Commis- [618]
sioners would send them a little, it
would be very acceptable.

Travelled among Buffalo all day. At 175
8 P.M., not being able to find water or
wood, we lay down in the plain, having 122
come to-day 40 miles. [136]

41: Ewers E,G-4,5 (1941-1944) 1945
NF6 Blackfoot NF6

THE BLACKFEET INDIANS WARRIORS AND CRAFTSMEN

105 On the grassy plains of southern Alberta and northern Montana, near the eastern base of the Rocky Mountains, live the Blackfeet Indians. Today, they number more than 7,000 persons, on three separate reserves in Canada and the Blackfeet Reservation in Montana. Ever since they have been known to White people, the Blackfeet have comprised three tribes—the Piegan, the Blood, and the North Blackfeet. Although these tribes spoke the same language, practised the same customs, were friendly and often went to war together against their common enemies, they were politically independent. They were typical, nomadic Plains Indians, dependent for a livelihood upon the great herds of buffalo that darkened the broad expanses of their country until they were exterminated in the years preceding 1884. Their life was attuned to a hunting existence. It was a life of movement, for they followed the buffalo herds. Their villages were composed of portable, skin-covered lodges that could be quickly dismantled and easily transported to new and distant localities. The acquisition of horses by the Blackfeet early in the eighteenth century increased their mobility and made hunting less arduous.

175 648 [181] [131] In the early history of the Northwestern Plains the Blackfeet figured primarily as warriors. They were not only the most numerous and powerful Indian people of the region, but they were the most aggressive. Through a hundred years of conquest prior to the mid-nineteenth century the Blackfeet drove back their enemies until they were able to lay claim to a vast area east of the Rockies, extending from the North Saskatchewan River in Canada to the present Yellowstone Park. For a quarter of a cen-

[P.9-A]

tury, in the early part of the nineteenth 175
century, the active hostility of the Blackfeet 648 ●
prevented American fur traders from
trapping and from developing the Indian
trade in Montana east of the mountains.
Until the middle 1880's the Blackfeet continued [721]
to send out raiding parties in quest
of horses to the camps of enemy tribes west
of the Rockies, and to those living southward
and eastward on the plains. Rarely
did these war parties return empty handed.
Their constant aggressive action made the
Blackfeet feared by all their enemies, White
as well as Indian. They were the warriors [181]
par excellence of the Northwestern Plains.

However, it is not only as men of action 175
that the Blackfeet are worthy of our interest.
They have also earned a reputation in
more peaceful pursuits—as skilled artists
and craftsmen. Descriptions of the Blackfeet [531]
by early fur traders and explorers tell
us of their love for ornamenting their native
costumes and equipment with simple but
colorful and attractive designs, of their
painstaking care in manufacturing even the
most common household objects with the
most primitive of tools, and of their ingenuity
in utilizing native materials in their decorative
arts. Early in the historic period 177
they learned to adapt some of the European-
made materials from the traders' stores to 175
use in their arts and crafts. Despite the
alien origin of these materials, the Blackfeet
employed them in a traditionally Indian
manner.

The observations of early writers are confirmed [121]
by the appearances of old objects of
Blackfeet make in museum collections.
Yet, if we would try to understand the significance
of the decorative arts in Blackfeet
life, we must not be content to see

[P.9-B]

47: Kane R,T-3 (1848) 1925 NF6 Blackfoot NF6

May 26th—We saw several large herds of buffaloes swimming across the river, all going south. 000

May 27th—What with the strong current, the men pulling all day, and our drifting all night, we again arrived at Fort Pitt, where we got an addition to our party of two more boats. These boats are all loaded with the furs and pemmican of the Saskatchewan district. The furs are taken down to York Factory, in the Hudson's Bay, where they are shipped to Europe; the pemmican is intended for those posts where provisions are difficult to be procured. We remained at Fort Pitt for two days whilst the other boats were getting ready, and I took advantage of the delay to sketch a Cree chief. He was dressed in full costume, with a pipe-stem in his hand.

May 29th—We left Fort Pitt, quite filling the river with our fleet of boats, presenting a most imposing and animated appearance, considering that we were navigating inland waters so far from the boundaries of civilization. We saw great numbers of wolves busily employed in devouring the carcases of the drowned buffaloes, and had some amusing hunts with our boats after them, our men greatly enjoying the sport. We continued our course in great humour and comfort, without meeting with anything which I considered particularly worthy of recording at the time, until

June 1st—When we saw a large party of mounted Indians, riding furiously towards us. On their nearer approach they proved to be a large war party, consisting of Blackfoot Indians, Blood Indians, Sar-cees, Gros Ventres, and Pay-gans. We had a Cree Indian in one of our boats, whom we had to stow away under the skins which covered the goods, lest he should be discovered by the party, who were expressly bound on an 648 [101]

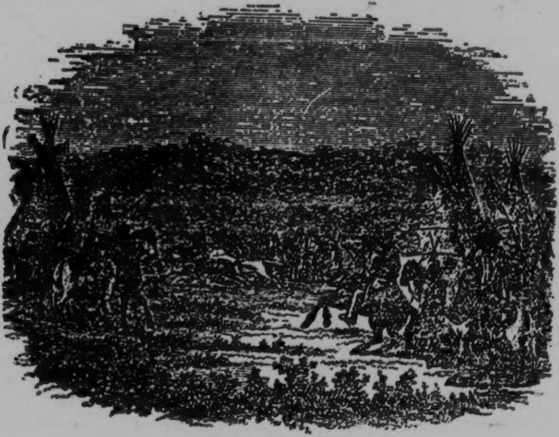
47: Kane R,T-3 (1848) 1925 NF6 Blackfoot NF6

● 648 expedition against his tribe, and whom our disproportionate number could not have opposed had they sought to take him from us. We instantly put ashore to meet them, and Mr. Harriett and myself met them on the banks of the river, leaving strict orders with the men to keep the boats afloat sufficiently near the shore for us
648 to re-embark promptly in case of danger. They re-
576 ceived Mr. Harriett, however, in a most friendly manner, he being personally known to numbers of them. They immediately spread a buffalo skin for us to sit down upon, depositing all their arms, consisting of knives, guns, and bows and arrows, on the ground in front of us, in token of amity.

There was, however, one exception to this pacific demonstration, in the case of an Indian I had frequently heard spoken of before, named Omoxesisixany, "Big Snake". This chief walked round the party, cracking and flourishing a whip, and singing a war song, evidently desirous of getting up a fight, and refusing to lay down his arms with the rest, although frequently re-
[276] quested to do so. At length, however, he put them
[431] down, and sat with the rest, and taking (though with evident reluctance) a few puffs from the pipe which was going the round of the party, in token of peace, he turned to Mr. Harriett and said, that as he had smoked with the white man, he would present him with his horse, at the same time leading up a beautiful brown animal which I had seen him alight from on our arrival, he handed Mr. Harriett, the lasso. Mr. Harriett declined his gift, explaining that it was impossible for him to take it with him in the boats.

726 They told us they were a party of 1,500 warriors, from 1,200 lodges, who were then "pitching on" towards Fort Edmonton; that is, they were making short

journeys, and pitching their tents on towards Edmonton, 726
leaving few behind capable of bearing arms. They [648]
were in pursuit of the Crees and Assiniboines, whom
they threatened totally to annihilate, boasting that they
themselves were as numerous as the grass on the plains.
They were the best mounted, the best looking, the most 726 181



No. 16—Horse Race.

warlike in appearance, and the best accoutred of any 726
tribe I had ever seen on the continent during my route. 181
As Mr. Harriett was very anxious to cultivate the acquaintance 126
and friendship of such questionable
characters, he accepted of their invitation to "camp" with
them until the following morning, which was exceedingly
acceptable to me, as it enabled me to make several
sketches, and to hear something about them. After our 541
smoke several of the young Braves engaged in a horse [525]
race, to which sport they are very partial, and at which [492]
they bet heavily; they generally ride on those occasions

541 stark naked, without a saddle, and with only a lasso
525 fastened to the lower jaw of the horse as represented
[492] in Sketch No. 16.[A] I had some difficulty at first in
[026] getting their chiefs to let me take their likenesses, but
after they comprehended what I wanted, they made no
objections.

648 Big Snake's brother was the first who sat to me, and
721 while I was sketching, he told me the following anecdote
[024] of his brother, of whom he seemed to be very proud.
Mr. Harriett understood the language and acted as interpreter. Some time back, Big Snake had the free admission to one of the American forts near the Rocky Mountains. Coming up one day with two other Indians, to enter the gate, it was shut rudely in his face by the orders of the commander, who had only lately arrived in the country. This his pride led him to regard as a direct insult; he rode away, and falling in with some cattle that he knew belonged to the fort, he commenced firing on them, and killed thirteen. As soon as the sentinel, who had given offence, heard the shots, he suspected the reason, and informed the superintendent, who immediately collected his men, and sallied out with them well armed, in the direction of the firing. Big Snake being on the watch, hid himself with his two companions behind a small hill.

The party from the fort apprehending there might be a large number of Indians hid, hesitated to advance within gun-shot; but a negro of the party offered to proceed and reconnoitre. Approaching the hill with great caution, and seeing no one, he began to think they had escaped; but, when within about twenty yards of the top, Big Snake sprang up from his lair and fired, bringing him down, and the next moment bore off his scalp, and waved it in derision towards the Americans.

A, [See Category 116 p. 295--Analyst]

A short time afterwards, Big Snake met a large 648
party of Blackfeet, "pitching" towards the fort on a 721
trade. On his arrival amongst them, he stated what he had done, and dared any one to censure his conduct on peril of making him his enemy. Although the band well knew that what he had done amounted to an open declaration of war, and would of course cut off any communication or trade with the establishment, unless they actually gave up Big Snake as a prisoner, yet they suffered their disappointment in silence rather than incur the anger of one whom they so much feared. Another band of the same tribe, ignorant of the circumstance, arrived at the fort a few days afterwards. The Americans, thinking this a good opportunity of chastising the aggressors, loaded one of their cannons with musket-balls, and while the unsuspecting Indians were standing huddled together at the gate, waiting for admittance, applied the fusee. Fortunately it did not explode, and the Indians, seeing the unusual stir and the flash, became alarmed, and fled. On a second application of the fusee, it discharged its murderous projectiles amongst the fugitives, and killed ten persons, principally women and children.

Some time after, Big Snake heard that one of the 578
most influential Indians of the tribe had blamed him, in 683
a speech, for involving the tribe in much inconvenience 626
and destroying their trade. On hearing these remarks, he directly went in search of the censurer, armed with a scalping-knife, and, on coming up with him, attempted to stab him; his foot, however, slipped in the attempt, which saved the other's life, although he received a severe wound in the side. These two continued for some time after in a state of deadly hostility, until Big Snake was persuaded by many of his friends to make peace, to

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48: Bushnell A-4 (no date) 1927 NF6 Blackfoot NF6

000 were discovered more than half a century ago, is reproduced in
Plate 7.

Unfortunately, the photograph which is shown in Plate 8 has not been identified. It belongs to the collection in the National Museum, but when and where made is not known. As it reveals the custom of the Northern Cheyenne, the burial scaffold may be regarded as having been erected by some members of that tribe. The supports of the scaffold at the corner nearest the position of the camera had fallen, thus allowing the scaffold with its burden to sag and to reveal more clearly the mass which rested upon the platform. One body had evidently been wrapped and placed within a travois basket, closely resembling and suggesting the example in the collection of the National Museum. One or more bodies, in addition to that in the travois basket, may have been on the platform. The six buffalo skulls had undoubtedly been placed upon the ground, near the scaffold, for some well-defined purpose or reason.

Blackfoot Confederacy

619 The allied tribes who formed this confederacy were the Siksika,
648 or Blackfeet proper; the Kainah, or Bloods; and the Piegan. Asso-
131 ciated with these were the Atsina, one of the divisions of the Arap-
aho. The habitat of these comparatively numerous tribes was the
rugged, mountainous region about the headwaters of the Missouri,
with the adjacent plains—a region where game was plentiful, where
the deep valleys offered protection against the rigors of the long
winters, and where their enemies would seldom penetrate. During
the earlier days of their contact with Europeans some bands of the
confederated tribes dominated the region as far north as the Sas-
katchewan.

764 Maximilian, who came in contact with these tribes during the
summer of 1833, wrote regarding the customs of the people at the
time of the death of one of their number: "When a Blackfoot dies,
they do not bury him in the ground if they can avoid it, but sew
him up in a buffalo robe, dressed in his best clothes, his face painted
red, but without his weapons, and lay him in some retired place, in
ravines, rocks, forests, or on a high, steep bank, and often cover
the body with wood or stones, that the wolves may not get at it.
[431] Frequently, when they cannot find a solitary spot, the corpse re-
mains above ground in a kind of wooden shed, and they were often
obliged to bury it, or to give it to the Whites as a desirable present,
765 which cannot be refused. The relations cut off their long hair,
smear it, as well as their faces and clothes, with whitish-grey clay,
[304] and, during the time of mourning, wear their worst clothing. Often,
775 too, they cut off a joint of a finger. They believe the dead go into

52: Uhlenbeck L-5 (1910) 1911 NF6 Blackfoot NF6
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115 he would be killed by the same tribe that had killed his brother.

726 In the summer of 1879 Bear-chief and Big-lodge-pole (O′maχkainistamiua) travelled a long time, and came to the camp of Sit-
115 ting-bull, a Sioux chief, and stole many horses. Then, after having
travelled one whole night, they came about noon accidentally to
648 the camps of two Sioux chiefs. They went into the lodge of one
of these chiefs, called Crazy-horse, because it was the biggest of
the lodges. Crazy-horse and two of his women were in the lodge.
When they entered, the women ran out. Crazy-horse would run
also, with his gun in his hand. Bear-chief and Big-lodge-pole caught
him, and shook hands with him, and motioned to him to sit down
and be quiet. So Crazy-horse sat down on his bed with his gun
on his shoulder. Then the Sioux people without made a rush for
the lodge, where they were, with all their arms. They raised the
sides of the lodge all up, so that Bear-chief and his companion
[201] could be seen from without. The Sioux made signs to Bear-chief
and his friend, why they had come to them. Bear-chief made signs
back, that the winter before the Sioux had killed his brother, and
that Bear-chief now had brought his body to the Sioux, that they
might kill him also. But he made understood by signs, that he
would defend himself. It was about noon when they entered the
lodge, and till dark the Sioux were talking among themselves. Then
two chiefs came into the lodge of Crazy-horse, who was always
sitting there, the gun on his shoulder. The two Peigans had also
their gun leaned against their shoulder. The two chiefs that entered
were Red-cloud and White-hat. Both of them went up to Bear-chief and shook hands with him. Then Bear-chief laid his gun
down between his legs. Crazy-horse commanded then, that the
people should leave. He also commanded his wives to give Bear-chief and his friend a drink of water. After that they gave them
a smoke. Then they smoked with each other the medicine-pipe.
Then there was given something to eat, which Bear-chief and his
companion took as a sign of friendship. Then the two Peigans laid
their guns at their side. The horses with which they had come
into the camp had been taken away from them. They did not sleep
that night, being together with Crazy-horse and the other two chiefs
in Crazy-horse's lodge. They were afraid that, if they slept, somebody would come and kill them. In the morning Bear-chief took
his gun. He went out from the lodge, followed by Crazy-horse and
another Sioux chief. Then they went together on horseback to the
other Sioux camp. When they came right close, Bear-chief saw
the horses which had been taken away from him and his compa-

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nion. They were tied to a lodge-door. Bear-chief took his butcher-knife, and cut the ropes which were tied around their necks. When he started to lead them off, the Sioux crowded around him. They had their guns, and some of them threatened to shoot him. Bear-chief pulled his six-shooter out of its cover. Then they made signs to him not to shoot. Then Crazy-horse rode up, and helped him to lead the horses back to his (Crazy-horse's) lodge. When they got back to that lodge, the people had pulled their lodges down, ready to move. Bear-chief saw a great crowd, standing round Crazy-horse's lodge (which had not yet been pulled down). All the people of both Sioux camps made an attempt to take the horses away from them. Then Crazy-horse and that other chief, who had gone with the two Peigans, got angry with their own people. They hit the horses of the people on the head with their whips, and made them stand back. One of the Sioux jumped, and took Big-lodge-pole's gun away from him. Bear-chief ran after him, and caught him by the neck, and threw him back, and took the gun away from him, and gave it back to Big-lodge-pole. Then Crazy-horse made signs to Bear-chief and his friend, to get on their horses, and to leave the camp. The two Sioux chiefs escorted them. When they had come out of the camp on a hill, they got off and shook hands. Bear-chief and his companion returned to their camp. The trip to the Sioux and back had taken 67 days.

When they had come to their own camp, they stayed there five nights, and then they returned to the Sioux camp. Now they were four, and Little-dog (Imitáikoān) was their leader. When they came down in the Sioux country, they saw a rider at a distance. Bear-chief was sent over to see, to which tribe that rider belonged. The rider did not ride away, and Bear-chief rode up to him. He caught the rider's horse by the bridle, and he held him, until his three companions came up. They wanted to kill him, but Bear-chief said, he recognized the man as one of the Sioux. He had made a promise to the Sun, that during that summer he would not kill any Sioux. The others insisted on killing him, and the Sioux was so much scared, that he acted like a child. The Sioux [201]
made signs to the Peigans, that his lodge was just on the other side of a high butte, and that they must come to his lodge. When they got near the lodge, Bear-chief made his companions stay behind, and went up to see, how many lodges there were. There was only one. Bear-chief went inside the lodge. There were two women, one child, a very old man, and a young man. Bear-chief [201]
hit all of them a little blow with a stick. The same he had done

115 to the Sioux, they had met first. It was a sign that nobody else had
any claim or right on them. Then the others came up. Little-dog
648 begged Bear-chief to kill the man, so that they might take the
201 women. Little-dog wanted the women, who were very fine-looking.
But Bear-chief objected. He had obtained a claim on the man
and his family by hitting them all with a stick. Then they left the
lodge, without harming them, and travelled all that day and night.
They discovered a camp towards the morning. Close to the camp
they found out, that there were Red river (Cree) half-breeds. They
went back, and stayed until sunrise. Then they went again to the
camp, and asked those half-breeds, where Sitting-bull's camp was.
115 Little-dog and one of the half-breeds rode away from the camp,
and after a while they came back. Little-dog told Bear-chief and
726 his companions, that the Sioux camp was very near. At sun-down
they left the Crees, and went to the Sioux camp. This camp was
nearly eight miles long. When they got near the camp, Bear-chief's
companions were afraid to go in to steal horses. He himself went
in, right to the lodges, and cut two horses loose from the stakes
to which they were tied. He took them out to his companions.
He did that four different times, each time stealing two horses.
He had taken away eight horses. When he had got them, he and
115 his companions started off to escape. Next morning they rode into
a camp of ten lodges. They supposed, that these belonged to some
648 of those Crees, but they soon found out, that they were Sioux.
The Sioux tried to take the stolen horses away from them. The
Peigans said, they would fight for the horses, and then the Sioux
left them alone. After that they had no trouble on their way
home.

A little while after they got back, he started again for the same Sioux, as the leader of five other Indians. When they got near to the Sioux country, they saw a man on horseback, long ways off. They approached, without being observed, and sneaked round. Bear-chief told the others: I shall go up, and meet him. He went alone, and when he came close to him, he recognized him as one of the Sioux, he had met in Crazy-horse's camp. The Sioux had killed two antelopes. They shook hands with each other. Then Bear-chief's companions came up. He told them not to do any harm to that Sioux. The Sioux gave them some meat. After they had let the Sioux go, they cooked their meat in a brush. When night came, they went to the camp of the Sioux. Bear-chief went right to the lodges, and cut two horses loose. The Sioux knew, that they were in the neighbourhood, and therefore the Peigans

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did not dare to steal more horses from them. They went home. 115
Bear-chief gave one of the horses to Little-dog.

Little-dog said to Bear-chief: I am going to the Sioux to make 648
a raid. On that trip Little-dog was the leader, but Bear-chief was one of the party. When they got near the Sioux country, they met some of the Cree half-breeds. They stayed in the Cree camp till noon. Then there came a man along on horseback. Bear-chief jumped 115
out, and saw, that it was an old man. That old man was Red-rock, the chief of the Sioux that were moving. He had a double- 726
barrel shot-gun with him. He captured him, before the others could do so. Little-dog wanted to kill him. Bear-chief said, that the time of his vow had not yet expired, but that he afterwards might kill the Sioux. They let that Sioux go, and went to the Sioux camp. There were nine in their party, but only four of them — amongst whom Bear-chief — started right for the lodges. Before they got there, Little-dog told two of the Peigans to go back. They would not do it, and Little-dog pushed them back. In the meantime Bear-chief went up to the lodges, and stole one horse. He had just done that, when he heard gun-shots. These gun-shots were fired by the two Peigans, whom Little-dog had offended, to warn the Sioux. Bear-chief had just time enough to jump on his horse and run away, whilst the Sioux from all directions came, and shot at him. The Peigans went home with one stolen horse.

When they got home, they remained in the camp a few days. 115
Bear-chief was the leader of three other men. They went again to the
Sioux. When they got near the Sioux country, they camped in 726
the evening at the mouth of Milk river. They had built a fire, for 648
it was snowing a little. They sat around the fire. Then they heard lots of people talking. They jumped up. Some of them tried to put the fire out. The people were already too close. The leader came up to the fire, and Bear-chief met him. He told him: Partner, I am a Peigan. You shall not be harmed. The other answered: You are a Peigan. My name is Gros-Ventre-boy, and I am an Assiniboin. After they had spoken to each other, he asked Gros-Ventre-boy for some meat, because the Assiniboins had a good supply of buffalo-meat, and he got some. And he called to his companions to come up and eat the meat. When they had done cooking, they all ate of the meat. They went to the Assiniboin camp. When they got to the lodges, it was snowing very hard. Bear-chief went up to the lodges, and stole four horses. When he came back to his companions, he told them, that the Assiniboins had not tied up all their horses, so that they could find some more, if they searched

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115 the hills. In doing so, they found 17 head more. They went home
726 with 21 head, and had no trouble any more.

[648] After a few days Bear-chief went as the leader of a new party. They were nine. When they got to the Sioux country, they saw from a high hill, where the camp was. They were about to make a charge on the camp, when they saw some Sioux, chasing buffalo, right below the hill. The Peigans stayed in their camp til twilight. Then they saw that Sioux party, which had been chasing buffalo, camping for the night. They went up, near the camp, Bear-chief telling the others, that he was going to see, how they had their horses fixed. Instead of coming back to tell them, he cut three horses loose. And he saw, where the other horses were loose, and he went there with the three, he had stolen, and drove 27 other horses out to his party. Before he got to his companions, he met two horses, and two saddled and bridled mules. He took them also, so that he returned to his party with 34 head. They got home allright with those 34 head.

A few days after that there were eleven in a party. Bear-chief
115 was the leader. There were ten full-bloods and one half-breed.
726 Before they got to the Sioux country, they saw from a distance
648 two riders, who rode towards the timber on the river. They charged, and then the riders jumped off from their horses, and fled into the brush. The Peigans saw, that they were white men, and said to the half-breed, that he should call to them to come out and not to shoot at them, because the Peigans were friends of the white men. They came out, and the Peigans saw, that they had pack-horses. They asked the white men, where they were going. The white men said, that they were trading whiskey to the Sioux. The half-breed told the white men: If you give me some of your clothes, I shall go with you and help you trade. They gave him some clothes, and then the half-breed told the Peigans to stay there till night, and to make a raid on the Sioux in the night, for they would be drunk from the whiskey. After a while they got near the camp, and they heard the Sioux making noise, so that they knew, that they were drunk. Bear-chief saw an Indian, who was tying his horse, wishing to get some more whiskey. Bear-chief stole that horse, and his companions went through the camp, and took 39 head. They started off, and left the half-breed in the Sioux camp. The half-breed overtook them, and told them, that the Sioux had bought whiskey for lots of horses and some robes.
000 The Sioux went after the white men and the half-breed, blaming them for their losing those 40 head. The Sioux took all the horses

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A few days later they started on a new trip. Bear-chief was the 115
leader. There were four Peigans, and seventy Crows. The Sioux
were looking out for enemies, and saw the party coming. Then 726
they made a charge on Bear-chief and his people. The Crows did [648]
their very best to escape. Bear-chief and the three other Peigans stayed behind and fought the Sioux. This was about noon, when the Sioux made a charge on them, and it was late in the evening, before they stopped fighting. They started home that evening, and travelled all night. Early in the morning Bear-chief killed a buffalo-cow. They skinned it, and commenced their breakfast. Whilst they were eating, they saw on a high bank, just above them, a rider. He spoke to Bear-chief's people, and before they could answer him, two more jumped up at his side, and shot at Bear-chief's companions. But then, seeing that there were so many, they ran away. They were Sioux. The Crows went after those Sioux. Bear-chief and the three others went in the opposite direction, where they saw one rider, a Sioux. This rider fled into the brushes. The others did not want to help him, but Bear-chief alone followed him, and shot at him, every time he saw him through the brush, till the Sioux went out into the prairie, where he was hard to get at. Bear-chief rode up to him, and the Sioux would shoot him, but Bear-chief's horse kicked the gun out of the Sioux' hands, and ran over him. The Sioux got up, and took his gun. He shot at Bear-chief twice, and the third time the gun refused to work. Then Bear-chief attacked him with a butcher-knife, cut him over his face, and near his heart, and cut off his head before he died. Then all the Crows, the whole seventy, came up. In the meantime Bear-chief's three companions, that stood upon a hill, had taken eight horses from the Sioux, who was fighting Bear-chief. They travelled night and day to get home.

The Crows were very glad, that a Sioux had been killed, though 115
they did not kill him themselves. Then the Peigans held a counsel,
and invited Bear-chief among them. The chiefs told Bear-chief 727
that he had done many daring deeds, and that he was already a [555]
chief on account of those, but that they now would give him a [553]
new name, instead of Takes-the-first-gun (Itóminàmaχka), the name [551]
he had borne till that moment. It was decided upon, that he
should be called Bear-chief (Nínoχkyàio), after old Big-nose. And [585]
then they had scalp-dances every night, for a week or more.

A few days after that there were five in a party. Bear-chief was 115
the leader. They went to the Sioux. They saw the camp at a long 726
distance. He told his party to stay behind, whilst he himself would

52: Uhlenbeck L-5 (1910) 1911 NF6 Blackfoot NF6
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115 go on a high butte to locate the camp. Afterwards they should
come up to him. But he waited and waited, and they did not
726 come. He waited until dark, and when they failed to come, he
started for the camp, but he could not find it. He walked a long
time about, seeking for the camp, and at last he returned to his
hiding-place, and stayed there all the day. And at night he started
again for the camp. This night there was clear moon-light, and
still he could not find the camp, though he was seeking for it
115 all the night. He had to go back to his hiding-place. During the
next day he prayed to the holy medicine-pipe, and said, that he
726 would use that pipe to dance with, if it would grant him, that
778 he might steal some horses. That pipe, Bear-chief prayed to, was
[782] the only pipe in this tribe, which might be used at the Round
[535] dance, when they were dancing all round the outside of the circle
camp. It was given to the tribe by an elk. That night he started
115 early by moon-light. Then he found the camp, and he could plainly
726 see the women cooking outside of their lodges. As soon as the
women went into the lodges, Bear-chief went to the camp, and
cut loose the rope of a bay horse. The owner was near, and gave
the alarm. Then all the people came out with their guns. He
jumped on the bay horse, and left his own horse, with saddle,
bridle, and blanket, and made his escape. He travelled all night
and all day. When he camped in the evening, it rained very
hard, and it continued to rain during the night. He had no blanket.
His only cover was a buckskin shirt. The following morning, when
he was on his way home, he met a party of Indians who had
stolen horses. He asked them, if they were strangers to him. They
did not say anything, but commenced to shoot at him. He ran
away. Perhaps they were Sioux. They chased him till a hollow
place in a big hill, where there was some brush. Then he came
out of the brush, and they shot at each other from a long distance.
115 They left him, and it rained very hard. He got on his
727 horse, and started to ride away. He came to Bear river, and then
he was almost frozen by the cold rain. Then he came to the
● 648 camp of 12 white men, who had been chasing buffalo. One of
these white men recognized him as Big-nose's adoptive son. Bear-chief's
wet clothes were taken off from him, and dry blankets
were given to him instead. They gave him half a cup full of
whiskey to drink. They made him lie down, and covered him up
with some more robes. He stayed there with the white men two
115 nights, and then he started home. His companions came to their
727 leader. They had not come to him on the butte, because they had

lost their way. When everything was allright, they had the medicine-pipe-dance. 115

Some time afterwards Bear-chief was the leader of ten in a 727
party. Among them were two Gros-Ventres. When they got near 115
the Sioux, three of them started for the lodges, Bear-chief being 726
one of them. There was clear moon-light, and people were sitting
in different places of the camp. His companions were afraid, and [648]
would not go into the camp to steal. Bear-chief went up to a lodge. There he saw the owner sitting among his horses, smoking his pipe. Bear-chief went to the door, where one black horse was tied to a stake. He led that horse away from the lodge. The owner did not seem to see him. So Bear-chief ran away with the horse, and came home allright.

Late in that summer they started again, Bear-chief as leader, and four others. He stole two horses from the Sioux camp, and his companions stole 14 head out from the hills. They got home allright.

About the middle of the following winter they started anew.
There were five in a party, and Bear-chief was the leader. They 115
had a hard time on that trip, for it was very cold. On their way 727
home, crossing the Missouri river, Bear-chief broke through the
ice, and went under, but his horse, struggling hard, pushed him [502]
up through the hole. Many-guns (Akáinamàχka) was near by, and threw a rope to Bear-chief, and pulled him out of the water. His horse was drowned. They got home with eight horses, stolen from the Sioux. They had taken many more, but they had to leave them on account of the big snow.

A few days after they got home, there were six in a party that 115
started on a raid. They got to the Sioux, who had put their lodges 726
in a circle, very close together. Inside the camp were the horses. He and one of his companions went to a place, where there were two lodges, and the Sioux had ropes between the lodges. Bear-chief and his companion cut the ropes. He himself stole two horses, and his companion one. Then they went out of the camp, and started home.

In the spring of 1881 he, as the leader of four others, pursued the Crees who had stolen horses from them. They overtook them on Milk river, but could not find their own horses. Instead of them they stole 27 head from the Crees. They got home allright with all the horses.

From 1880 till the spring of 1881 the Peigans had been on 115
friendly terms with the Crows. In the spring of 1881 the Peigans 726
left the Crows, and started home for their own country. They 648

115 726 648 camped on Arrow creek after several days of move. Some Crow Indians overtook them there, and stayed with them. When they moved, the Peigans went north, and the Crows, who had stayed with them, back south. In the meantime there was one Peigan family staying with the Crows, and that family was now moving north. They met those other Crows, who were going south. The Crows killed the Peigan and his wife, and from that day the peace was broken. Bear-chief did not do anything else during 1881.

115 726 But in the spring of 1882 he was the leader of a party of 14. They went to the Crows, and got there in the morning. They did not go up to the lodges, but they got six horses, just a little way from the camp. The Crows had seen, that they took these horses. So they chased the Peigans, and overtook them not far from the main camp. The Peigans came to a hill. Bear-chief stood at the bottom of the hill, and told the others to go on top and dig pit-holes, where they would be safe from the bullets. While he was staying there, he was fighting the Crows single-handed. He had three belts. When he had used the cartridges within them, he went up to the top of the hill, where his companions were. When he got there, he saw that they had dug the holes. But one of his companions had been shot near the hip-bone. They had killed one Crow Indian, and one horse. After that the Crows set the timber afire, which was close to the hill. There was plenty of grass. It burned till it was quite close to them, and it was very smoky and hot. Bear-chief, after filling up his belts with cartridges, got out from the holes. They fought all the rest of the day. And when the night came, they had only one horse left of the six, they had stolen. The rest were all killed. Then Bear-chief's companions came out of the holes, one at a time, to sneak away. Bear-chief put the wounded man on his one horse, and then he led it away. They made their escape. Next morning they found, that they were far away from the place where they had had a fight. Bear-chief selected three men from his companions. He told the rest of them, that they should go home with the wounded man. He himself and the three others went to the Cheyennes. When they got to the Cheyennes, 120 head of horses were out on the hills. They took them with them. And after they had gone two nights, Bear-chief told two of his companions to take the horses and go home with them. He and his one companion saw a trail of some moving tribe. He told his companion, that they should follow that trail two nights, and they overtook these Indians. There were only two lodges. They had 21 head of horses, and Bear-chief and his companion took

had the nightmare, which was a sign, that something serious 115
might happen to him. Bear-chief advised him to go home. He did 726
not follow this advice. When they came to the Cypress hills, they
slept in some cabins, built by the Cree half-breeds, and that night 787
Little-plume got again his nightmare. His companions threw water
on his face and body, but he did not wake up. Then they put
burnt buffalo-hair under his nose, but it was a long time before
he woke up. He awoke after all kinds of hides had been burnt
in the cabin. That day they went on, and saw two circle camps 115
of the Crees. In the evening, when they got close to the camps, 726
Little-plume said: A man has discovered us. Little-plume and his
three first companions ran away back to the hills. Bear-chief and
Many-guns went to the lodges, as close as they could get. Bear-chief told Many-guns to hold his horse, and went up to one of
the lodges. A man and his wife came out. Bear-chief stood amongst
the horses, so that the man did not see him. He cut one horse
loose. It was a wonder, that they did not see him. He went to
another lodge, and cut another horse loose from its stake. After
that he had some trouble in getting out. The horses did not want
to go out. He managed it after a while. Then they started home.
He overtook Little-plume with his companions.

In the spring of 1883 there were five in a party. Bear-chief was the leader. They went to the Cypress hills. There were three lodges, and there were six head of horses standing by themselves. Bear-chief and Iron-necklace (Míkskìmekin) stole the six horses, and told their companions to start home with them. Bear-chief and Iron-necklace went to the main camp. When it was day-light, they could see the camp close by. They waited there, and thought, they would have to wait till night. But to their surprise they saw four young men driving a band of horses straight in their direction. Bear-chief and Iron-necklace hid deeper in the brush. The four young men drove the horses right to a grassy spot. Then they turned the horses loose, and went back to their camp. As soon as they went out of sight, Bear-chief and Iron-necklace drove the horses away. There were 21 head. They came home with them allright.

After this trip Bear-chief got his second wife. She was the widow 115
of a man who had been killed in 1882. He moved with his two
wives and Many-guns to the Sweetgrass hills, and wintered there.

In the spring of 1884 some cowboys came to his camp, and 115
reported that a band of Crees had come over and had stolen their 726
horses. The cowboys went back home from there. Bear-chief and [648]

52: Uhlenbeck L-5 (1910) 1911 NF6 Blackfoot NF6
Piegan
Montana

115 Many-guns followed those Crees. Bear-chief left his two wives just
726 where they camped on Willow creek. The Crees were just one day
ahead of Bear-chief and Many-guns. In the night they went to
the Cree lodges, but did not find the horses of the cowboys. Still
115 they found 12 head of the Cree horses. They stole them, and
[727] brought them home allright. Bear-chief gave his share of the horses
to his wives.

He camped a long time on Maria's river without undertaking
115 a raid. Still in the same spring Bear-chief and seven others went
to the Cypress hills. He and another man went up to the lodges
726 of the Crees. He went first and cut two horses loose. When he came back to his companion, he held the two horses, he had stolen, and the other two, on which they rode. His companion went up to the lodges, and cut also two horses loose. When they came back to the other fellows, the man, who had gone with him to the Cree camp, started right home. Bear-chief and the others went to the hills, and stayed in the brush till the next night. He and another Indian, called Crow (Sapó), Bear-chief taking the lead, went up to the lodges. Bear-chief stole two horses, and went back to Crow, and told him, that he should go also to cut the rope of two horses. Crow went up to the lodges, and stole two horses. They went back on the hills with the stolen horses, and stayed there all day. During the day they saw another camp, not far from the camps, they had visited. Late in the evening he could see the people driving their horses out on the hills. They went there in the night, and drove a band of 57 horses away. Then they went home. On their way back they found 18 horses, that belonged to white men, and took them, the horses
115 not being guarded. Before they got home, they found out, that
727 among the 57 horses there were nine head that belonged to those
cowboys, who came to report, that their horses had been taken
648 away by the Crees. As soon as he came back to his camp, he
returned the nine horses to the cowboys, who gave him some
money as a recompense.

For the horses taken from the white men, the soldiers of Fort Assiniboin came up, and arrested Bear-chief for stealing. The officer, who arrested him, had Elie Gardepie, a Cree half-breed, as an interpreter. They took him out of his lodge, and brought him to the tent of the commanding officer. As soon as he came in, he was very happy, for he knew the commanding officer very well. The commanding officer called him by his brother's name, which was Prairie-chicken-child. Bear-chief's brother had been hired by

the commanding officer as a scout, and captured some of the 115
Nez-Percé's during the Nez-Percé war in 1877. Since that time the
commanding officer was Prairie-chicken-child's (Weasel-moccasin's) 727
friend. Now he said to Bear-chief, that he had commanded his 648
arrest, but that he intended to release him. Bear-chief told the officer, that two of the 18 stolen horses had been left by him on the road, because they were tired. The officer commanded, that his soldiers should go, and take the 16 horses, that they had picked up on the road. The soldiers went into the hills with Gardepie as a guide, and brought them to the commanding officer's camp. The officer commanded Gardepie to bring them before his tent, for Bear-chief to identify them. Then he told Bear-chief: You must leave off these raids. Stay at home, and behave yourself. Be like your brother, and help the whites. The officer also wished to take the horses, which the Peigans had stolen from the Crees, but Bear-chief refused this, because the Crees had been making raids on the Peigans for years. The commanding officer released him, only taking the 16 head.

After that the soldiers camped near the Sweetgrass hills to watch the Crees, so that they could not steal any more cattle from the
Peigans. Bear-chief went over to the Sweetgrass hills, and then 115
the Peigans moved to this reservation, his first wife leaving him, and coming up here.

Some time after that a part of the Peigans came also to the
Sweetgrass hills, and after a while, Bear-chief taking the lead, there 115
was a party of ten men going to the Cypress hills. Afterwards 126
Bear-chief was told by some Crees, that the night before Bear-chief came to the Cypress hills a medicine-man of the Crees had had a dream, that the man who had stolen the horses from the Crees was
again on his road. He said to the Crees, that if his medicine [192]
[= natósiu, that means the same thing that the Iroquois call *oreada*] was stronger than Bear-chief's, he would be able to kill him; else his best horse would be taken away by Bear-chief. Bear-chief and his nine companions came close up to the lodges, and then they could see two Crees coming from the lodges, and lying down on the prairie as guards. Bear-chief's companions were afraid to steal horses. Bear-chief was aware, that there were three Crees lying on the ground as guards. He told his people, that he would go to steal horses, but that they must shoot, if the Crees discovered him. It was towards the morning. He started to the three Crees, that were lying down, having covered their heads with their blankets. As he past by them, he heard them talking, but he did not stop, and went to the central lodge. Not far from it

115 some wood, but Bear-chief told her to go on. The night was very
726 dark. When she got to the lodge, she dismounted, and cut two
horses loose. He told her: Go out, the way we came in. I am
going to get some more horses. And he cut five more horses loose
from another lodge. The Crees were not yet all asleep. He started
with his five head, and overtook his wife. They drove the horses,
and they found four horses more, that were hobbled. He cut the
hobbles loose, and now they drove 11 head. They came home,
[727] and their camp was down at Fort Conrad. Bear-chief's wife gave
one of her horses to Joe Kipp.

After that the Flatheads came over, and stole horses from the Peigans. The Peigans chased them. Big-plume was their leader. Bear-chief found four of the Flathead horses. He took them all, and gave them to Big-plume. Then Bear-chief continued the chase, but he had to return without seeing the Flatheads. They came home.

A few days later there were five in a party, Bear-chief being the leader. They went to the Assiniboins, and got to their camp. They saw nine head of horses near the lodges. He took five, and his companions took the other four. They got home allright.

Afterwards there were eight in a party, that started for the Sioux country, Bear-chief being the leader. That evening the Sioux discovered them by seeing them from a long distance. Bear-chief and his friends knew, that they had been discovered. They had to be very careful, and approached the lodges from another direction. Bear-chief took two horses from a lodge, and on the hill they found 24 horses more, which they took with them. They stayed out a very long time. In the meantime his wives became very uneasy. On their way back they came to some Cree half-breeds. It was day-time. They took 11 head of horses from the Crees. Then they came home allright.

115 Some time afterwards he called all the chiefs together to come
729 to his lodge. They all ate together. He filled the pipe, and gave
them to smoke. He told them: I have called you together to tell
you, that I have made my last raid on the enemies. I have worked
very hard to gain honour. Now I shall never go on another raid.
115 And from now on I shall follow the ways of the white men. The
648 chiefs proposed, that he should go with them all to the Indian
agent, and tell him the same thing. The agent was very happy,
177 to hear Bear-chief saying, that he had left off making raids. The
[729] agent gave to the chiefs a big supply of groceries. From that moment
all the Peigans left off making raids.

115 Since that time Bear-chief lived quietly in the Reservation. In

53: Uhlenbeck L-5 (1910-1911) 1912 NF6 Blackfoot NF6
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539 726 koăn itanístsiu omíksi Pekánikoaiks: A´nnòm ákaitàupik, áikòkus istákaipiskoχtòk amóm Pinápisinàu, ákoχtatsèiua nápiăχke. A´ipstsiksisàmo itáistoχkim akékànists, ki itóχtoyìau Pinápisinài otáiistsèkinsaie, ki sotámisksinoyìauaie, otauátsisaie. Nínoχkyàio itsinóyiu omí nitsítapìkoăn, áiisksipistsènyai ótàs, istáiinyài, máχkatoχkòtaksiaie nápiăχke. Nínoχkyàioa kámosatsìu omím ponokă´mitai, ki otoχpokómiks iχ´tsítokòyi amóistsi moyísts, okúmosoaiks ponokă´mitaiks niíppi piχ´ksékopùtsi. Sotámomatòiau, itsítakitsìau omí anáukitapìkoăn omístsim Pinápisinàuyists. Omá anáukitapìkoăn itsitsítsiuaiks, ki itanístsiuaiks: Omám Pinápisinàuam iχ´púmmau nápiăχke ponokă´mitaiks ki imoiániks. Itoχpókiuòiau omíksisk nápikoaiksk ki omí anáukitapìkoăn, áutoimìauaiks, omoχtátsaχsau nisíppiks ótàsoàuaiks. Itótomoyiauaiks omíksim ponokă´mitaiks, ki itáuauaχkautsèiau. Túkskama omíksi nápikoaiks itóau oχkátsi. Omíksi Pekánikoaiks sotámoχtaχkàiiau.

2. Mátsipuχsapakauò ksistsi-[701] [648] kuísts mátsitsitàkomatapò Nínoχkyàio. Nisúitapìi Pekánikoaiks ki iχ´kitsíkippitapìi Isapóiikoaiks. Pinápisinài áukakiosatsìau okaχtómoai, ki itsinóyiauaiks otáistauauaχkàniaiks. Itákaàtseiau Nínoχkyàioi ki otoχpokómiksai. Omíksi Isapóiikoaiks iikákimàinu, máχkotsimmotàniau. Nínoχkyàio ki omíksi matsókaaipekànikoaiks apatóχtsik iχ´tóiau ki áuaχkau-

the half-breed told the Peigans: Stay here for a while, make a raid on the Sioux in the night, they will be drunk from the whiskey. After a short while they got near the camp, and they heard the Sioux making noise, and then they knew, that they were drunk. Bear-chief saw an Indian, who was tying his horse, wishing to get some more whiskey. Bear-chief stole that horse, and his companions went through the camp, stealing 39 horses. Then they started off, they left the half-breed in the Sioux camp. The half-breed overtook them, and told them: The Sioux have bought whiskey for horses and robes. They went after the white men and the half-breed, blaming them, because they had lost 40 head of their horses. They took those horses from them, and they had a fight. One of the white men was shot in his leg. The Peigans then returned home.

[Cf. UHLENBECK obt 76 sq.]

2. A few days later Bear-chief started on a new trip. There were four Peigans and seventy Crows. The Sioux were looking out for enemies, and saw the war-party coming. Then they made a charge on Bear-chief and his companions. The Crows did their very best to escape. Bear-chief and the three other Peigans stayed behind and fought the Sioux. It was about noon, [when] the Sioux made a

thing, that I saw in my life-time. 539 787

3. A'uke, ánnik púχsapuχtsik óinoχtsòkskaχpi pisátapists nitsápsists. Annó Natokyókasi niétαχtai, otsítsistsχtaχp, nitsítotoikàkima mánistami. Nitoχpokómau nitoχkémana ki Sépistatòsiua. Nitáiksistsikakima. Omá nitoχkéman nítoχpokotoiskunakimau. Mistáki spóχts nitsítαskunakataii ímαχkikìnoaiks nátokαmi, nitsínitaiks. Nitánistaua: O'miks nátokαmi ímαχkikinoaii nitsíniksini. Annóχk ninámaua nitáksâχkyau. Omám óχkotok nitsitótopiχ'pinan. Nitáiksistsoχkyau, nitsítapitsau omí óχkotoki, ki nitsítsinoain, otauátaupis. Nitsitókàsatàu ninámaun. Nitásamαnan omám óχkotok. Itámsokaisaitαmiu, nitsíksketsokinan. Nitsítanistau nitoχkéman: Nitáksinoaii oápsspiks. Nitsítaisìmok. Nimátoχtoàu. Nitstáχtsimàtsis nímoχtsitsiksìskaχkoau, ki itsíkαmaupiu. Mátsinoaiisαpìuats. Nitsítonoαnan ómαχkitsekapisàu. Nitsítakitαnan. Omíksi nítαχkstàniks nitsítsitapoχpinàn. Kínnysie nitsókskai pisátapists nitsksíniχ'pists nipúitapìsini.

3. Now, since then I saw wonderful things a third time. Here on Two-Medicine river, where it enters the forest, I went to chop my poles. I went with my wife and with Medicine-owl. I had done chopping. I went shooting with my wife. High in the mountains I shot two mountain-sheep [literally: big-horns], I killed them. I told her: Over there are two mountain-sheep, that I killed. Now I shall clean my gun. There was a rock, we came to it and sat by it. I had done cleaning [my gun], I put it up against that rock, and then I saw, that [the rock] moved about. I quickly took up my gun. We looked at that rock. It was then breathing aloud, it scared us very much. I told my wife: I shall see its eyes. She forbade me [to try]. I did not listen to her. I touched it with my ramrod, and then it moved faster. It never looked. We recognized it, [that it was] a big frog. We left it. Then we went over to those [mountain-sheep], I had killed. That are the only three wonderful things, I have seen in my life-time.

After having told these three short stories, Bear-chief said to me about Little-dog, whom he had mentioned in the first one:

Nitsítαmitstsiχ'pinan kaχtomínaiks, nistóa ki Imitáikoãn. Imitáikoãn únni okaχtómisini

We are the only [true] war-chiefs [living now], myself and Little-dog. Little-dog's father was

539
622
[701]
[177]
[648]

539 622 [177] [648] iχ'tséksìnau, ki nápikoaiks otsístapakepotok; ǽnnamaie ítomaipinapo; napíinakiks itsitsáutsipi.

made a chief on account of his wars, and the whites made him a greater chief; he was the first [Indian of this tribe], that went east; he brought first the white soldiers to this country.

Wonderful experiences of Four-horns'.

539 787 1. Kyáiesisæχtài nitsitáukunaii áuyikàitsii. Kokúyi nitsístapu, nitsí'tsko. Nimátatsksiniχ'pa, nitsítapauauaχkaχpi. Nimátsàpiχ'pa, noápespiks nimátoχtsàpiχ'pa, omá matápiu nímoχtsauatsàpiχ'pa. Iiksíkaksiu. Ki itsístapu. I'kaistapàumaχksim, itspáiχ'tsiu. Nimátsitsàpi. Nokóai nisótæmotaχkai. A'moχk áninitsiu pisátapi ki istúnnatapi. Kǽnnaie nitsíu ámoχk nitotómipisatàpsin.

1. I was camping on Maria's river [literally: Bear creek] in a shady place. In the night I went out, I went on the prairie. I did not know, where I was going to. I could not see, I could not see with my eyes, there was a person, that caused that I could not see [literally: from him I could not see]. He was very short. And he went away. He was getting larger, he rose up in the air. Then I could see again. I then came home to my lodge. In that way happened this wonderful and dangerous thing. And thus was this first wonderful experience of mine.

2. Omí Sékokinisisæχtài místapupæmoχtsi nitsítapauàuaχk. Nitáipuχsapaχkàiis, nitsítsiksistapo. Kokó omá mátápiu nitsítsinoau. Nitsítomàak: Nimátsksinoàuats, manistápitapìiχ'p. Amó niétæχtai nitáitoto. Immíu. Nimátsàpiχ'pa, nitsítæmsokitopæmaipuyi. Noχkátsis mátsipistsiua. Nimátsksiniχ'p, manistópæmoχpi. Omá matápiu ǽnnimaiè itsístapu. Nimátatsinoàu. Iχ'pakúyisuyìu,

2. On the other side of Birch creek I was travelling about. When I started to go home, I lost my way. In the night I saw a person. He walked ahead of me. I did not know, what kind of person he was. I came to this river. It was deep. I could not see [how it had happened], [but] I was standing on the other side of the river. My leg was not wet [that means: my legs were not

foot converts—an old chief and his family—were accepted in Christian baptism by Father DeSmet. 175 797

The Roman Catholic missionaries, whom the Blackfoots called "Black Robe Medicine Men," were followed shortly by the Protestants ("Short Coat Medicine Men"): a Methodist, the Rev. Robert T. Rundel, ministered to the Blackfoots at Ft. Edmonton, Canada, in 1840, and a Presbyterian, the Rev. Elkanah Mackey, whose wife was the first White woman to be seen in Blackfoot country, spent a *whole month* at Ft. Benton in 1856.

Actually, no permanent Protestant mission was established among the Indians of Montana until the 1890's, and this mission was a delayed result of the well-known "Peace Policy" of President Grant. 175 797 648 After an attempt to place the Indian Bureau under the jurisdiction of the Army (which probably would have meant the extinction of the Indian) had been defeated in Congress in 1870, Grant's administration decided, incredibly, to allot the several Indian reservations to the influence of various organized church groups. Despite the fact that no Methodist missionary had ever been among the Blackfoots in the United States, the Blackfoot Reservation fell to the Methodist Episcopal Church. The Jesuits, who with the active encouragement of Blackfoot Agent Major Alfred J. Vaughan, himself a Protestant, had already established a mission among the South Piegans, were literally forced to withdraw from the Reservation and to confine their missionary efforts to the wandering Blackfoot bands.

From the very first, Christian missionaries among the Blackfoot 175
Indians found themselves hoeing a very rocky row. The desire of 797
the Blackfoots to be converted to Christianity did not exactly create
a Coney Island crush around the baptismal fount, and there were
several very obvious reasons for this. (1) The Blackfoots could not
understand the rivalry and dissention among various factions of the
same religion (the Black Robes vs. the Short Coats). (2) The
Blackfoots could not quite dig a religious attitude which simultane-
ously venerated motherhood and condemned sex. The shortage of [595]
men caused by hunting accidents and constant intertribal warfare
made polygamous marriage among the Plains Tribes a social and
economic necessity, and those Indians that took one wife in Chris-
tian marriage invariably kept a few spares around the teepee (fre-
quently the younger sisters of wife No. 1) in accordance with the
Indian concept of matrimony. (3) The Indians were understand- [183]
ably unenthusiastic about religious tenets which condemned two
of the primary virtues of traditional Plains Indian culture—the steal-

175 797 083 ing of horses and the eradication, whenever possible, of one's enemies.

At one point, though, there was no dearth of Blackfoots who earnestly desired to become accepted for baptism into the Roman Catholic Church. In the summer of 1846, Chief Victor and his Flatheads, 101 648 aided by a dozen lodges of Small Robes (the Small Robes were a rather independent band of Piegans who were friendly toward the Flatheads) achieved a smashing victory over a superior force of Absaroka (Crow) Indians. And when the Flatheads attributed their remarkable success to the power and protection of the "Black Robes' God", this was all the Blackfoots needed to hear. Baptism by the Black Robes was obviously a guarantee of victory over your enemies, and the more bloodthirsty the Blackfoot warrior, the more ardent became his petition for baptism. But since this attitude did not reflect the concept of Christian thought which the good priests of the Church had been attempting to convey, Father Point (the Blackfoots called him "Tusks"), who headquartered on the Missouri River at the American Fur Company's post of Ft. Lewis, recorded that of the 651 Blackfoot Indians he was able in all good conscience to accept for baptism, 625 were children, 22 were women, and only four were grown men.

797 796 The foregoing notwithstanding, Roman Catholicism was always more successful than Protestantism amongst the Blackfoots, and it is not difficult to suggest several reasons why this should have been so. Although the old-time Indians could in some measure reconcile the more abstractive philosophy of the Protestants with certain sciotheistic elements of their own religious inheritance, the more tangible paraphernalia associated with Roman Catholic ritual was much more impressive to them, and much more easily identified with aspects of their existing beliefs. During a Blackfoot Sun Dance or Medicine Lodge, buffalo tongue is cut into small pieces and distributed among certain participants; this gesture is in all respects strikingly similar to the Christian sacrament of the Eucharist. Also 783 during the Medicine Lodge ceremony, Indian women will step forth and openly confess their sins, and this, of course, suggests the confessional both of the Roman Catholic Church and of the high order of the Episcopal Church. (It is important to realize that these Medicine Lodge ceremonies were not derived from the Christian religion but had their existence before the coming of the White Man.)

797 551 789 From the point of view of the Blackfoot fighting man, two aspects of religious tradition possessed by the Roman Catholics were espe-

464 said, "Yah, I want to work." The man said, "When can you start?"
Jim said, "Right now," and handing me the axe he said, "*Sáh-koh-y-nah*, you fix Dad he's lunches." And Jim went to work. Since that
time he has been a janitor, a carpenter, a painter, a laborer . . . you
name it! He has also done a lot of fire fighting. The Blackfoots, as
[368] well as the other tribes in this area, are always on call to fight serious
forest fires—sometimes they are flown to the scene of a conflagration
as distant as Colorado or California—and they are the very best at
that work.

Jim seldom if ever quits a job; the work runs out, that's all. And even when unemployed, Jim never spends an idle day. When no other source of income is available, he cuts fenceposts and firewood, hoping that he can find a buyer. I felt a tug at my guts when I discovered the other day that Jim had invested some of his few dollars in a mail order detective course—anything to try to establish himself in some sort of profession. Of course, Jim did not tell me this; I found portions of the course in his room.

427 Jim's real dream is to be able to lease some more land and to
build up his own herd of cattle. The grass is fine here, and Jim has a
426 pretty good string of horses, but the winters are hard and long, so
Jim needs a pretty substantial loan to winter a herd the first year.
[643] He has tried to get a loan authorized by the Tribal Council, but to
no avail. The Indian Reorganization Act of 1934, which was in great
657 measure beneficial (or at least so intended) to the Indians but
622 which also opened the door to petty political shenanigans on the
Reservation, deprived the Chief of any real authority and placed
him rather in the position of a contemporary European king. The
[643] Canadian Indians still retain their band chiefs, but on the Piegan
Reservation it is the Tribal Council which handles business and
political affairs, including the tribal funds and the employment, for
427 whatever purpose, of tribal lands. A great deal of the best Blackfoot
grazing land has already been leased to White ranchers, and this is
648 a sore point with the Chief. He continually exhorts the Tribe to uti-
311 lize in their own endeavors more of the Reservation's resources,
185 to raise more cattle of their own. But there are racketeers even
622 among Indians, and the Chief has a lot of opposition. Several years
ago, somebody actually took a shot at him. The bullet is still in the
living-room wall.

643 Jim did tell me that he ran for Tribal Council but did not make it.
Jim is a full-blood, and the Council is controlled by the breeds, the so-called "educated" Indians, and by those Blackfoots who play up to the politicians and to the large land-holding Whites of the region.

Jim says that some of the Tribal Council members have been 643
pretty square and have sincerely attempted to benefit the Tribe as a
whole, but that a great many of the members have been no better
than the law allows. The Chief is definitely unhappy with the 622
Wheeler-Howard Act (The Indian Reorganization Act), and from 657
what I have been able to learn, even old Senator Wheeler, who was
in large part responsible for the introduction of the Act, is not exactly
overjoyed with the results of this piece of legislation. The Chief 622
states flatly that the Tribal Council since its very inception has peculated 643
like poultry on a worm ranch, and although the Chief's claims
against the Council are admittedly eristical they are certainly not
totally lacking in substance. The Chief described in detail some of [661]
the more questionable episodes of the Council's reign, and some of
them, including a reputed sojourn in Mexico by Council members at
tribal expense, would definitely bear looking into. The Council meets
tomorrow, and I am going to attend the meeting.

When the Chief had properly barbecued the Wheeler-Howard 622
Act and the Tribal Council, he launched into a tirade against the 657
treaties which the Federal Government has made with (perpetrated 648
against) the Blackfoot Nation. The Chief's formal education was
limited to a short period of attendance at the Fort Shaw Indian [871]
School (at which time he was already a grown man), and Jim went
only as far as the fourth grade, but Jim reads omniverously and both
he and the Chief are remarkably well informed on Blackfoot history
and on the current political situation involving the American Indian.
The Chief has very definite ideas about how the Indian's position
could be better through various legislative acts and abrogations on
the part of the Federal Government, and the old fellow does not
confine his protests to monological grumbling; he directs a torrent
of correspondence to both his United States Senator and the Commissioner
of Indian Affairs.

The early treaties between the Plains Indian Tribes and the 648
United States Government were, of course, not designed to benefit
the Indian but to protect the White migrants and settlers who had
begun to invade Plains Indian territory. The White Man was encroaching
upon Indian land and the Indian was doing his damnedest
to prevent it, but the probability is that most of the Whites killed
by Plains Indians prior to the Civil War period had simply happened
into the path of a war party which was out to war upon an enemy
tribe.

The first White Man's treaty to effect the Blackfoots was the 175
Treaty of Fort Laramie. Acting upon the naive assumption that the 648

primary cause of intertribal warfare amongst the Plains Indians derived from the fact that the territorial boundaries of the various tribes had never been definitely established, D. D. Mitchell, Superintendent of Indian Affairs in St. Louis, suggested to Washington that the Government should call a council of all Plains Tribes living between Texas and the Missouri River, whereupon would be concluded a unanimously acceptable definition of the territorial limits of all the tribes. In September, 1851, at Ft. Laramie on the Platte River, Mitchell held council with delegates from the Assiniboines, Hidatsas, Mandans and Arikaras (Rees). The Gros Ventres at this time were so closely allied with the Blackfoots as to be considered by some persons a part of the Blackfoot Nation, but later on, following an unprovoked attack by the Gros Ventres on a Piegan camp, the two tribes became bitter enemies. Neither the Blackfoots nor the Gros Ventres had opportunity to be represented at this council, but since a substantial portion of Blackfoot territory was located south of the Missouri, the boundaries of Blackfoot lands were defined in the treaty which the council concluded, the Treaty of Fort Laramie. In other words, the limits of Blackfoot tribal influence was outlined in a treaty which was signed not by the Blackfoots but tribes hostile to them. The treaty was, naturally, totally ineffectual, and warfare among the various Plains Tribes continued unabated.

The first treaty council in which the Blackfoots had actual participation was held on the north shore of the Missouri, below the mouth of the Judith, during the middle days of October of 1855. (The forthcoming treaty was called "Lame Bull's Treaty," after Lame Bull, the elderly chief who headed the Piegan delegation; however, the Chief informs me that Lame Bull, known also as Lone Chief, had relatively little to do with the actual proceedings at the council and that the main Piegan speaker was a famous orator, Big Snake, whom the Piegans also called Loud Voice.) Present at the council were representatives of the "four" Blackfoot Tribes (Blackfoots, Bloods, Piegans and Gros Ventres) as well as delegations from the Flatheads, Pend d'Oreilles, and Nez Percés. A single Cree chief, Broken Arm, brought tokens of friendship from the Crees and Assiniboines, but the Crows—perhaps the bitterest of all the many enemies of the Piegans—were represented only indirectly by their Nez Percé allies. The idealistic expectation of the Whites was that Lame Bull's Treaty would establish everlasting peace and harmony among all parties involved, and one of the articles of the treaty declared that a large part of the territory which had in the Treaty of Fort Laramie been designated as belonging exclusively to the Blackfoots should now be considered a common hunting ground for *all* the tribes. Furthermore, the Assiniboines, traditional enemies of the Blackfoots, were to be allowed in addition the privilege of hunting in the easternmost portion of Blackfoot land. As might well have been expected, this arrangement worked out somewhat less successfully than the partition of Germany at the close of World War II.

Obviously all these altruistic attempts on the part of the Great White Father to bring peace and tranquility to his Little Red Brothers were not without ulterior motive. The Government wanted tribal boundaries defined in the first place so that it could then treat with the separate tribes regarding passage through and settlement upon their lands by Whites, and in Article VII of Lame Bull's Treaty we find the real reason that the United States went to so much trouble to set up the treaty council. Article VII, which I feel sure the Indians did not understand at all, provided that United States citizens should be guaranteed free navigation of all lakes, rivers and streams, and should be free to pass through and *live in* the territories designated as Indian possessions. Further, the United States would have the privilege of constructing roads of all kinds, stringing telegraph lines, and building everything from agencies and military posts to missions and schools. The Indians were to receive from the United States certain recompense in the form of goods and provisions, and education in such matters as agriculture, mechanical skills, and the White Man's religion.

There is every indication that the Blackfoot chiefs were sincere in their desire to end intertribal warfare, but this aspiration was foredoomed by the failure of the Crows to sign Lame Bull's Treaty and by the lack of control which the chiefs had over the young men of their respective tribes. For the old chiefs to tell their young warriors to suddenly cease making war and stealing enemy horses was equivalent to having the rich old men of a White community inform the young men that from now on there must be no further attempt on their part to gain wealth or to elevate themselves either socially or politically. Following Lame Bull's Treaty, incidents involving Blackfoot and White were relatively minor, but the ancient intertribal rivalries continued.

The beginning of negotiation with the Whites marked the beginning of the end of the Blackfoots as the Power of the Plains. Adhering to a philosophy which has been handed down to our modern-day salesman and advertising agencies, the Whites decided that since the Blackfoots were not really the treacherous scoundrels they had been painted but were instead highly intelligent and basically

648 175 honorable people, this made the Blackfoots fair game for a dirty deal. The White settlers were clamoring for more Blackfoot land, and they got it. Additional treaties were made between the United States and the Blackfoot Nation in 1865 and in 1869; neither treaty was ratified by Congress and so never became United States law, but the ceded land in question was nevertheless thrown open to White settlement. What did the Blackfoots know of congressional ratification! So far as they knew, when a treaty was made, it was made! Who can blame the Blackfoots for becoming perturbed when the payments that they had been promised upon signing the treaties were not forthcoming?

In 1871, the Congress decided to hell with the whole farcical motion of making treaties with the Indians. Thereafter there would be no treaties—indeed, from that time onward the Congress would no longer recognize the sovereignty of any individual Indian tribe. 648 175 657 From then on, an Indian was an Indian and the only good Indian was a dead Indian and in 1873–74, by presidential orders and congressional acts, the southern boundary of the Blackfoot territory was shoved northward over two hundred miles and the land thrown open to White farmers and stockmen. No payment for the land was made to the Blackfoots, and arbitrarily the Blackfoots, the Gros Ventres, the Assiniboines, and the River Crow Indians were all placed upon the same reservation. The instigator of this congressional action was one Martin Maginnis, Montana's territorial delegate in Washington. Maginnis, who was nothing but the willing tool of Montana's land-hungry White pressure groups, has overcome stiff opposition to win my nomination as the rottenest politician in the history of Montana. In opposition to Maginnis was Blackfoot Agent R. F. May, whose courageous championing of the rights of his Indian charges resulted in his being dismissed from his post. May was succeeded as Agent by John Wood, a man with no administrative experience who had recently been a city marshal in the State of Iowa. [622] When Chief White Calf (Onistáipokah), my Indian grandfather, who had by this time become *de facto* head chief of the Piegans, complained to Wood against the taking by the Whites of the finest portions of Blackfoot land, Wood replied that the Indians had more land than they needed and that if each Indian would cultivate ten acres of soil he could easily support ten persons for the entire year. One prominent ethnologist and historian (who incidentally has spent nearly his entire career in government employ) has referred to Wood's statement as a "common sense argument." This attitude conveniently ignores the facts that the Blackfoots were hunters, not

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farmers, and that the Blackfoot land in question was, for reason of soil, climate and other factors, totally unsuited to agriculture.

But still the Whites pressed for more and yet more of Blackfoot land. No sooner had the Whites succeeded in killing off the last of the buffalo herds—the great northern herd, which had grazed primarily in the Blackfoot hunting grounds—than our old friend, Delegate Maginnis, introduced into the House of Representatives a bill designed to deprive the Blackfoots of this rich expanse of grazing land and to open the area to White settlement. This time Maginnis found opposition; the Commissioner of Indian Affairs objected to the bill on the grounds that any further land cessions should be negotiated with the Indian tribes involved. The Congress, deciding that henceforth the Indian should be cheated of his lands with all due legality, acquiesced in favor of the Commissioner's position and proceeded to authorize, in May, 1886, the appointment of the Northwest Commission for the purpose of negotiating in the field with the "Sioux, Assiniboine, Gros Ventre and Blackfoot Indians of Montana" for the cession of "so much of their land as they do not require, in order to obtain the means to enable them to become self-supporting, as a pastoral and agricultural people, and to educate their children in the paths of civilization."

With regard to cession of additional lands to the United States Government, the Indians had absolutely no choice. With the buffalo gone, the Indian had no way of surviving without assistance from the Federal Government, and the only thing the Indian possessed with which to barter for Government supplies was his land.

But the portion of Indian land now sought by the Government—some 17,500,000 acres, or nearly nine-tenths of the entire Blackfoot Reservation—was immense, and the Northwest Commission was cut to the quick upon learning that the Blackfoots, under the leadership of the intelligent and knowledgeable Onistáipokah, were not eager to accept the paltry sum of 1½ million dollars for this tremendous expanse of some of the finest grazing land on the North American continent. The chiefs demanded 3 million dollars for their land (an amount still far below the going price for Montana land at that time) and in a communication to the Secretary of the Interior we find the Commissioner whining that "the Indians had been tampered with by designing white men whom we found at the Agency—men who hoped to gain some advantage to themselves, in one way or another." I have been unable to find any record of exactly who these "designing white men" were supposed to have been, nor have I located any explanation of exactly how these men

● 648 657 175 might have benefited from the Indian's receiving a fair price for his land (which was to be paid for not in money but in such things as commodities, livestock, medical and educational facilities, etc.), but the Report of Negotiations of the Commissioners states that it required "long and patient reasoning" to induce the Indians to accept as payment the per annum sum of $150,000 for ten years.

According to the Chief, who in company with his father, Onistáipokah, was actually present at this land sale, the only tampering with the Indians was done by the commissioners themselves; "long and patient reasoning" by the commission consisted in their threatening the minor chiefs, who had been assigned by the Agent to such petty posts of authority as policeman or judge, that if they did not agree to the terms laid down by the commission it would mean the loss of their jobs. This land sale, which included the sale of the Sweetgrass Hills and became the basis of what the Blackfoots later called the Sweetgrass Claim, was described to me by the Chief:

> When we sold the Sweetgrass Range it was cold weather, but there was not very much snow on the roads and I was able to drive my father to the meeting in a wagon. The meeting was held at Joe Kipp's trading post, at Old Agency. At this time my father was head chief of the Piegans, but all the minor chiefs were there as well, and everybody took a vote on how much they would ask for Sweetgrass Range. My father did not wish to sell for less than $3,000,000, but some of the others, who did not know the value of a dollar, were anxious to accept the Government's offer of 1½ million. On my father's side were Mad Wolf, Wolf Plume, Double Runner, Lone Gun, and Eagle Ribs. On the opposing side were Bear Chief, Three Sun, Calf Sitting, White Grass, Horn, Gambler, and several others.
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> My father asked $3,000,000 for the Sweetgrass Range because he felt that when the Government offered the Indian a price for anything, the price could be doubled and the Indian still would not be getting a fair deal. But no Piegan chief ever had complete authority—not even the head chief. All the chiefs took a vote, and the vote of the head chief counted no more than any other vote. My father and his supporters were outvoted by a large majority led by Bear Chief and Big Nose [Three Sun], so the Sweetgrass was sold for 1½ million.
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> Those who opposed my father on this issue—including Big Nose, who was band chief of the Grease Melters, and a notorious drunkard—were so ignorant that they did not even know

648 657 175 how much a dollar was worth. The commissioners attempted to show these men how much value the money represented by using beans. They opened a one-hundred-pound sack of beans and counted the beans into a barrel. Each bean was intended to represent ten dollars, the value of the bean being suggested by the commissioners' pointing to some article in the trading post, or to a horse or a cow or a wagon, and then showing how many beans would be required to purchase that particular item.

Then each Indian present at the meeting counted one hundred beans into the barrel, each in turn, until the proper amount had been arrived at. There were over two hundred Piegan men at the meeting, and when they had counted around only once, Bear Chief and Big Nose and some of the others said that that was all they wanted because now they had enough money to last them the rest of their lives. Then my father told them that they hadn't yet counted even half of the amount the Government had offered, so they listened to him.

When finally the amount of payment was settled, Big Nose said that he wanted the payment to be made to the Indians in cash. And then my father spoke, and I remember his words:

"Do you remember the time we were coming home from the war party down at Cree House! Do you remember how cold it was! Do you remember that we burned bunch grass to warm ourselves because we had no other fuel! If we take this payment in money and give it to the people, the money will disappear as fast as that bunch grass burned. We will see to it that the money is used in the manner most profitable to our people. We will use the money to buy for the people cattle—and horses and machinery and other things that they will need in order to raise the cattle. We do not want gardens, and we do not want any chickens or hogs or sheep. Our land is grazing land, and now that the buffalo are gone we must graze cattle."

648 657 175 233 My father had his way, and he went personally to Washington to see the President and to ask that most of the payment for the Sweetgrass Range be made to the Indians in the form of heifers and bulls, and also some big Morgan stallions to breed into our horse herds.

Finally the Government sent us a thousand heifers, but once again there was argument amongst the Piegans. My father wanted to summer the cattle on the western part of the Reservation; in this way the herd would be kept near our homes where we could keep an eye on them. But the agent wanted to

648 graze the herd on the eastern part of the Reservation, and once
657 again my father and his supporters were outvoted. The cattle
175 were summered on the east side, and when we rounded them
233 up that fall nearly half of them were missing. I don't know who stole them—it might have been Whites, or half-breeds, or the Agent himself—but the cattle were gone.

657 The culprit in this case almost certainly was the Agent who, like
233 most agents and supervisors of the Blackfoot Reservation before and since, had private cattle interests bordering Reservation land.
[422] The Chief says that the Agent would not allow the Indians to brand the cattle, and that it was rumored that the Agent had his own cowboys run part of the herd off and affix to them his own brand. I do not doubt this, just as I do not doubt that Agent George Steel caused a mis-count of the Agency herd by getting the Indian cowboys drunk and having them drive the same cattle through the chutes three or four times. Even as late as the 1930's, large numbers of Indian cattle were disappearing from the Blackfoot Reservation. (This was not the only racketeering of Indian property going on at that time, and it was during the 1930's that Superintendent McFatridge was ousted from his job and sentenced to a term in a federal prison.)

657 From the very beginning, the Indian agent situation has been a
175 sordid one. The agent was appointed ostensibly for the purpose of protecting the interests of the Indian, but those few that honestly attempted to fulfill this mission were summarily dismissed from their posts, particularly during the administration of President Grant. A lot of the crooked agents were bounced too, but only if their thievery became so obvious as to threaten the position of the politicians who had appointed them. The position of Indian Agent was for many years simply a political plum; the agent appointee had no knowledge of or interest in the Indian situation, his sole concern being in how speedily he could divert Indian appropriations to his own pocketbook. Often the agent did not reside on the Reservation—during one period of eighteen months, the Blackfoots were not even *visited* by an agent—and although official records and correspondence (from which so many of our contemporary "Indian experts" derive their information) are apt to sparkle with purity, the fact is that most of the employees of the Indian Service in the United States during the past century were persons of low degree. As Mari Sandoz has pointed out in her fine book, *Cheyenne Autumn*, even Abraham Lincoln, "The Great Emancipator," was so

concerned with human rights that he handed out the job of Indian 657
agent as political spoils to men so incompetent or so untrustworthy 175
as to be unsuited to any (other) governmental post. One of Lincoln's appointees to the Indian Service amassed a large fortune from a job which paid only $1200 a year.

The final Government grab of Piegan land was possibly the most 648
hypocritical of all. In September, 1895, three commissioners met 657
with the Piegans (the Indian tribes of Montana had since 1888 175
been assigned to separate reservations, and the Bloods and North Blackfoots and North Piegans had long since been subjects of the Queen) to negotiate for purchase of the westernmost portion of what remained of Blackfoot territory in the United States. The Government had by this time finally conceded that the Piegan Reservation was "wholly unfit" for agriculture, and the ostensibly altruistic motive behind the purchase was to provide the Piegans with money with which they could stock their remaining lands with cattle. The Chief, who refers to this land cession as "the time we sold the Rocky Mountains," tells me that the whole deal was whipped up in the first place by Agent Steel, by that so-called "friend of the Indian," George Bird Grinnell, and by other Whites who had become convinced that the territory in question, the eastern portion of the Continental Divide in northern Montana, contained gold in large quantities. Events subsequent to the land sale would tend to bear out the Chief's contention.

The commissioners offered $1,250,000 for the land, but once again old Onistáipokah and his supporters held out for $3,000,000. At length a compromise was reached; the Government agreed to provide the Piegans for ten years with $150,000 worth of annual benefits in the form of such things as cows and bulls, clothing, rations, mechanical implements, medicine and medical facilities, the erection of agency buildings, mills, blacksmith and carpenter shops, etc., and the payment of agents and agency employees (few persons appear to be aware that it was the Indian, not the Federal Government, who provided in one way or another the salaries of agency personnel). This agreement was in effect a ten year extension of the Act of 1888 which involved the cession of the Sweetgrass Range.

The great hypocrisy of this act, the Act of 1896, was in the failure 648
of the United States to honor provisions with regard to the rights of 175
the Piegans to certain privileges attaining to the ceded territory. The Act guaranteed that the Piegans should retain hunting, fishing

648 175 and timber rights in the ceded portion "so long as it shall remain public lands of the United States." The Chief says that his father, Onistáipokah, believed also that the Piegans were to retain all mineral rights except those pertaining to surface deposits. But in 1898 the ceded land was thrown open to White prospectors, and hundreds of Whites scoured the region in search of gold (of which, I delight in reporting, there was none). Adding injury to insult, the Government then declared most of the ceded territory a national park (Glacier National Park), and although the question of whether the use of land as a national park removes it from the category of "public lands" is still open to dispute, the Piegans have been denied access to the resources of their former land which was guaranteed by the act under which the territory was ceded to the United States.

657 175 731 Probably the most tragic single effect of the White Man's intrusion upon the Blackfoot way of life was the notorious "starvation winter" of 1883–84, during which so many of the Chief's people perished for the simple want of enough food. This terrible event was a direct result of the disappearance from the Plains of the Blackfoot staff of life, the buffalo, but the occasion is rendered even more horrible by the fact that although there was adequate warning to the Whites that the Piegans were about to face a period of great privation, no measures were taken to meliorate the situation.

A definite warning that the last of the buffalo herds, the great northern herd upon which the Blackfoots relied for sustenance, was fast disappearing, came in 1879 when the Canadian Blackfoots found no buffalo north of the "medicine line" (the International Boundary). At this time the Blackfoots were still living in their traditional bands and traveling freely between Canada and the United States, and when Canadian Indian Commissioner Edgar B. Dewdney saw that his Indian charges were suffering for want of food, he issued them such provisions as he was able and advised them to cross the line into the States. This action gave the Canadian Government time to set up a program of assistance to the Indians, who by this time were dependent upon the Government for their very lives. And yet, when four years later the Indians of the United States were faced with a similar situation, Agent John W. Young of the South Piegan Reservation refused to allow his "children" to cross into Canada to participate in the annual food distribution which the Canadian Indian Commission was about to undertake.

Agent Young remains a controversial figure to this day; he has been alternately cursed and canonized by historians attempting to

establish the blame for the Starvation Winter. In my opinion, Young 657
was neither saint nor sinner. Granted that Major John Young was 175
exasperatingly G.I. in his refusal to allow the Piegans to draw Canadian 731
rations, the records show that in each of his annual reports after 1880 Young emphasized the increasing scarcity of game available to the Piegans and the alarmingly increasing number of Indians who were dependent upon Government rations. According to official figures, in 1881 there were 605 Indians camped near the Agency; in 1882, the number had increased to 1955; and in 1883, at which time only a small percentage of the Piegans participated in the unfruitful hunt for buffalo, about 3000 Indians were camped near the Agency in hopes of drawing sufficient rations to carry them through the winter.

Indian Bureau funds for the purchase of rations were estimated and budgeted a year in advance, and when early fall of 1883 found Young already forced to issue the Indians only ¼ rations, he earnestly petitioned for additional appropriations from Washington. In late September, a communication from the Commissioner of Indian Affairs informed Young that appropriations for the Blackfoot Agency had already been exhausted and that no further appropriation was forthcoming. Young immediately submitted his resignation, although he remained at his post until relieved by Reuben Allen the following April. In the interim, the only relief sent to the Blackfoot Agency was a small shipment of cattle which arrived in December. A sizeable quantity of bacon was also freighted in, but it was so rancid and so filled with worms that the Agency doctor condemned it as unfit for human consumption.

With regard to the responsibility of the Federal Government in 657
this matter, several questions present themselves: 648●

(1) Why, despite strong warnings in the form of the sudden dis- 175
appearance of the buffalo north of the International Boundary in
1879 and the increasing scarcity of buffalo in the Blackfoot hunting 731
grounds, was no legislation undertaken to stop or at least to regulate the continuing slaughter of the buffalo by White hide hunters?

(2) Why, when the number of Piegans camped near the Agency in 1883 was officially estimated at 3000 (and this represented only a portion of the tribe), was the official census of the Piegan Reservation for reason of Government appropriations numbered at less than 2500?

(3) If, as some defenders of the Government have claimed, it was not possible to freight supplies to the Piegan Agency because

657 of deep winter snow, how was it then possible to freight in plenty
175 of supplies to the army posts in that area and to the trading posts
which supplied the wants of the White ranchers of the region. And
731 why did not the freighters come through in the summertime when
648 the snow was gone? (The Chief tells me that most of the actual
starvation among the Piegans occurred in the late spring and early
summer, when supplies were completely exhausted.)

(4) Why did not the White ranchers, who were illegally running thousands of cattle on Blackfoot land, make some effort to aid the totally distressed Indians whose land they were using? (A few of the small White ranchers did attempt to help out, but unanimously the big cattle outfits evidenced concern only that the starving Piegans might kill some of their cows.)

(5) Why did John Schuyler Crosby, Governor of Montana, wait until August 29, 1884—at which time the Piegans had been in a state of starvation for more than a full year—before sending an indignant protest to the Secretary of the Interior against "keeping the Nation's wards within the limits of this territory in such pitiable, starving condition." Crosby concluded his pharisaical little phillipic with, "Humanity and justice demand their immediate relief." But he failed to comment upon his own lengthy delay in taking issue with a situation about which he had surely possessed a full awareness for many months.

All these questions have a single answer, and the beginning of that answer is to be found in official statements of the Indian Rights Association, which investigated the matter with admirable thoroughness. For months the Indian Rights Association labored to convince the Congress of the fearful condition of the Piegans and of the necessity for immediate action upon the matter of emergency appropriation for their relief. But not until the Association submitted an open letter to the press stating that the procrastination of Congressman John Ellis, Chairman of the House Sub-committee on Indian Appropriations, was jeopardizing the lives of hundreds of Indians, did Ellis consent to introduce a joint resolution calling for $50,000 to be made immediately available for the assistance of the Indians. Once introduced, the resolution passed both Houses of Congress in two days.

But for our real answer we must seek out the motives behind the actions (or lack of same) of such men as Ellis, Governor Crosby of Montana, and Montana Delegate Martin Maginnis. Maginnis, in company with Senator George Vest of Missouri, actually was on

a tour of inspection of conditions on the Piegan Reservation on 657
September 14, 1883 (although his real purpose in being there ap- 648
parently was to seek out the possibility of further land cessions by 731
the Piegans), and although he witnessed with his own eyes the be- 175
ginnings of real starvation among the Indians, he failed to inaugurate any action which might have prevented the unspeakable suffering of the following winter.

Why did these things occur? The answer is perfectly apparent, and well known to students of the history of Montana, but so far as I know nobody has ever had the guts to come right out and say it. The facts are as follows:

(1) No effort was made to preserve the buffalo because General Sherman, who is tenderly remembered by the South and especially by the State of Georgia, decided that the best way to destroy the Indian was to remove his ability to provide for himself and so make him totally dependent upon the Federal Government. (This is a political expediency which has been employed with success since the earliest recorded periods of human society, and one which is still being expounded by various governments throughout the world —and if the moccasin fits, put it on!)

(2) Certain territorial and federal officials made no effort to aid the Plains Indian. They undertook, in fact, every effort to destroy him, because the powerful White cattlemen—and some of the Montana cattle interests were immensely powerful—wanted the Indian's land. The public officials in question were nothing more than the pawns of the cattle barons (and the mining and railroad interests, etc.) that had put them in office.

There it is, in a nutshell.

When the afternoon's discussion reached a point which suggested 731
a possible opening for such an inquiry, I rather tentatively asked 124
the Chief whether he remembered the Starvation Year. By way of reply, he looked at me steadily for a moment and then said, "I was already a grown man." Long moments of silence followed, and as I began to accept that the Chief quite understandably had dismissed my question, the old fellow began to speak again. At first his remarks were scattered—some of them really quite extraneous —and I knew that he was finding it difficult to discuss this most tragic event. And when finally he found the words with which to convey to me the facts of the Starvation Year, the minute details which welled from his memory and, I felt, from the substance of

scene, the Chief's fourteen war parties constitute a rather remarkable 721
achievement. By the time he made his raids, the Whites had [648]
begun to move into Montana and to establish military posts and to
make treaties (none of which they honored) with the Indians, and
so the Chief had a pretty rough time of it. He has a bullet hole in
his left arm just behind the wrist, and although I have not been able [752]
to lead him into a detailed discussion of the matter, he did mention [411]
that the wound was quite an annoyance because the bullet broke
the bone and he had trouble loading the muzzle-loading old rifle
that he was using at the time.

With several notable exceptions—during one battle the Piegans 726
killed more than 300 Gros Ventres and Crows—most war expeditions 721
were made for the purpose of stealing horses and were composed
of only a half-dozen or so warriors. Piegan war expeditions were
not, as one authority has phrased it, "spur of the moment affairs."
Usually they were planned at least several days in advance, and it
was customary for the young warrior to first seek the blessing of an
old man of the tribe. Sometimes the warrior built a sweat lodge in [783]
which the old man would purify him, and sometimes the two just
smoked a pipe together. Almost always the older man would give [789]
the youngster a protective token or amulet to carry, and the sale
of especially powerful medicine bundles or war bundles was quite [778]
a thriving business.

At length I asked the Chief to tell me frankly who the best fighters 181
among the Plains Tribes had been, and very emphatically he replied 648
"[píkắñi]" (the Piegans). And I guess that history bears out his
opinion very well. In the early days, during the westward movement
by way of the Oregon Trail, the pioneers took a southerly
route around the Blackfoots (instead of following the natural course
of the Missouri Valley, which would have been the logical route)
simply because the Blackfoots were so powerful and so fierce that
to invade their land was virtual suicide.

The Blackfoots never did engage in anything resembling full-scale 648
warfare against the Whites, although one could not have [726]
blamed them if they had done so. Especially during the post-Civil
War period, when false reports of gold in Blackfoot territory precipitated
an invasion of the region by the toughs and whiskey
peddlers and the brand of scurf invariably attracted to promises of
quick money, the Blackfoots were very badly used by the Whites.
But the only "battle" between Blackfoots and the U.S. Army occurred
in January, 1870, when there took place an action which has

● 648 rightfully been inscribed in history books as "Baker's Massacre." Protestations and pretensions by the Army with regard to this disgraceful episode were many, but the facts are plain enough: At the break of a bitter-cold dawn on January 23, 1870, Colonel E. M. Baker led four companies of cavalry, plus a full company of infantry and fifty-five mounted infantrymen, in a surprise attack upon the Marias River camp of Heavy Runner, a Piegan who had always been friendly toward the Whites. Of the 173 Piegans that died in this attack, ninety were women, fifty were children under twelve years of age, and only fifteen were men between the ages of twelve and thirty-seven. One soldier died during the attack, but he was [164] probably killed accidentally by his noble comrades in arms because [1131] Heavy Runner's camp was not only totally devoid of fighting men but was suffering a severe plague of small pox. Baker claimed that he thought he was attacking the camp of Mountain Chief (Mountain Chief's boys had been raising a little hell with the Whites, which is not surprising in view of the fact that Mountain Chief's brother had been shot down in cold blood, and for no good reason, in the streets of Fort Benton).

When I asked the Chief about the Massacre, he made the following statement, displaying as always a profound knowledge of history and of the White Man's political machinations:

> This is an important story. It will show you the way the Whites treated the Blackfoots in the early days, and it will show you how hard my father tried to have peace with the Whites.
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> At this time the Army was looking for Mountain Chief because Mountain Chief's son, Owl Child, had killed his brother-in-law, Four Bears [a White man named Malcolm Clark who was married to a Piegan woman]. Mountain Chief had been camped with his band on Bear River [the Marias River], but he had moved his camp further down the river, and Baker could not find him so he attacked the camp of Heavy Runner. He was guided to the camp by the men who had been supplying whiskey to the Indian camps on Bear River. The men were Joe Kipp, a half-breed whom the Piegans called "Choe Keepah" or by his Indian name, Raven Quiver, and three other White men the Piegans called Brown, Small Neck, and Horn Child.
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> All the young men of Heavy Runner's band were away on a winter hunt when Baker charged the camp. When the soldiers first showed up, Packing-Tail-Feathers-Coming-Over-The-Hill

> went out to meet them. He was holding up a piece of paper 648
> and a peace medal that had been given to him by Commissioner Ike [Isaac Stevens]. An officer shot him down, and then the soldiers went through the camp and killed everybody they could find, even the little children. There was big measles [164]
> [small pox] in the camp at that time, and those too sick to move were burned to death in their lodges. Most of the soldiers were drunk.

The fact is quite well established that prior to Baker's attack an Indian from the camp came toward the soldiers holding up a peace medal and a paper of some sort. Up to now, it had been generally surmised, but without substantiation, that the man was probably Heavy Runner himself. The Chief is the first one to identify the man by name. An elderly Blackfoot lady offered the opinion that Packing-Tail-Feathers-Coming-Over-The-Hill was another name for Heavy Runner. The Chief says no.

The possible drunken condition of Baker's soldiers has not been pursued very diligently, but every Indian source at my disposal (and I have interviewed two ladies whose grandmothers were children in Heavy Runner's camp at the time of the attack and who hid by the river at the first approach of the soldiers) states with firm certainty that the soldiers were definitely drunk. In view of the facts that Baker's command had just made an all-night march in sub-zero weather, and they were in the company of known whiskey runners, I definitely go along with my Indian informants.

The Chief's story continues:

> At the time of Baker's Massacre I was over in Canada with my father. Mountain Chief came over to join us right after the Massacre, and he thought that all the Blackfoots should join together and take revenge on the Whites for what they had done. But my father, who was Civil Chief [Head Chief] of the [622]
> Piegans, would not allow this. My father said that that was exactly what the Army wanted the Blackfoots to do—to go back over to the States and attack the Army. This would give the Army an excuse to wipe out all the helpless Piegans that were more or less hostages on the Blackfoot land in the States, and that was why there were so many soldiers at Fort Shaw. My father knew that the Army was trying to make a lot of trouble with the Indians because they wanted Congress to

648 turn over the control of Indian affairs to the Army, and that would have been the end of the Indians.

My father spent the winter on Milk River in Canada, and the following spring he went back to the States to talk to the Army. He arrived at Rock House [Ft. Benton] just as the boats were landing, and immediately the soldiers put my father under arrest and took him aboard one of the boats where an officer asked him questions. The officer asked my father whether he had come over to the States because he was seeking revenge for what had been done to the Piegans on Bear River. My father said no, but the officer kept on asking him the same question. Finally my father became angry with the officer and told him that if the Piegans were out after revenge the Army would know it by now because there wouldn't be a White man alive or a White house standing between here and the Medicine Line. My father said, "I came over here to find out why you killed our people. I do not want that there should be any more killing. I want to see my people able to go to sleep at night without wondering whether they will be killed in their lodges. And I want the same thing for the White people—especially the old people. I want them to be able to sleep without fear."

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657 There was in fact at the time of Baker's Massacre a movement before the Congress to transfer the Indian Bureau from the Department of the Interior to the War Department. If the Blackfoots had retaliated against the Army in force, the bill probably would have gone through; as it was, when Vincent Colyer of the Board of Indian Commissioners made available to the newspapers "the sickening details of Colonel Baker's attack on the village of Piegans," the bill was squashed—and squashed along with the bill was the practice of employing Army officers as Indian agents (although all Indian agents continued to be addressed by the honorific "Major"). The whole situation suggests that the Chief's father, old Onistáipokah, was indeed something of a diplomatic and political genius. He succeeded to an extent far greater than that of any other Plains chief in performing successfully the primary function of a civil chief, that of saving his people from annihilation.

648 Since the Chief was contemporary with both Custer and Sitting Bull, I asked him whether he had ever met either one of them. He said that he had heard of Custer, whom the Blackfoots called "Buckskin shirt," but that he had never met him. And then he amazed

54: Lancaster F-3(1958-1966)1966 NF6 Blackfoot NF6
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me with the matter-of-fact statement that he not only had seen Sitting Bull but had been with a hunting party that had once captured him. The Chief has a rather low opinion of Sitting Bull (an understandable attitude toward one's enemies) but I believe every word of the story he told me because (1) the Chief does not lie, ever, and (2) historical fact bears out every detail of the narrative. Historical record places Sitting Bull at just about the time and place the Chief encountered him, and even such minor details as the kind of horse that Sitting Bull was riding (a sorrel) are given credence by history (Sitting Bull owned a large sorrel horse, and it is also generally believed that Custer's horse, also a sorrel, was captured uninjured by the Sioux after the Battle of the Little Big Horn). Further, the Sioux were especially antagonistic toward the Blackfoots at this time because the Blackfoots had refused to join with the Sioux in an all-out effort to drive the Whites out of Montana.

Actually, Sitting Bull was no great shakes as an Indian leader, but he was much publicised and since I, like everyone else, have been bombarded since childhood with propaganda about the famous Sioux, I was quite thrilled by the Chief's tale. (Sitting Bull's fame derived primarily from his world-wide travels with Buffalo Bill Cody's Wild West Show, during which time Sitting Bull peddled enough "authentic souvenirs" of the Custer Massacre to equip the United States Marines.)

THE TIME THE PIEGANS CAPTURED SITTING BULL

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It is too bad that I do not remember exactly when this happened. That is where the White Man has an advantage over the Indian; the White Man writes down the time that something happens, so he is always able to remember when it took place. We Indians didn't write things down, and usually we remember the exact time of their occurrence only because they happened the same year as something else that the White Man wrote down in his books: a big battle, a treaty, or perhaps a hard winter with much sickness.

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All I know is that what I am going to tell you about now happened sometime during the middle 1870's [it must have been during the spring of the year 1877]. I know this because I was a young warrior then, just in my teens, and since I am 105 years old now you must realize that this happened a long time ago.

54: Lancaster F-3(1958-1966)1966 NF6 Blackfoot NF6
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224 648 [619] The time had come for the Blackfoots to go on their spring hunt, and all the scattered bands joined together to set forth in search of the buffalo. There were Bloods and Blackfoots and Piegans, and we all belong to the Blackfoot Nation. There were no buffalo in the Sweet Pine Hills [the Sweetgrass Hills], so our hunting party split up and went to look for the herds. Most of them went down toward the Crow country [probably heading for the Judith Basin, a vast grazing area located roughly between the present sites of Great Falls and Lewiston, Montana]. At this time we had treaties with both the Crows and the Crees, and I went with a smaller party which headed almost due east, toward the Crees and Assiniboines. In our party there were thirty lodges of Piegans, twenty-eight lodges of Bloods, and twenty lodges of Blackfoots.

At a place called Kinnickinnick Creek, north of what is now called Wolf Point, Montana, we happened upon an encampment of Crees. A lot of them were Cree half-breeds. But at this time all the Blackfoots were at peace with the Crees, and since the Crees had found plenty of buffalo, we set up our encampment with the Crees and hunted with them.

224 We killed the buffalo by building a pretty big corral out of logs at the base of a little bluff about as high as a teepee. Then we ran some buffalo over the bluff into the corral where they [171] couldn't get out. [This was a popular Cree method of hunting buffalo.] Then we killed what we wanted and turned the rest loose again. We killed most of them with bow and arrow, and we all marked our arrows so we would know who had shot that buffalo. I remember one man who stood up on the bluff and hit a buffalo in the head with big rocks until he was stunned and then ran down and cut his throat with a butcher knife. That was pretty foolish, because a wounded buffalo can be dangerous.

In the old days, the Blackfoots would run part of the herd over a big bluff maybe a hundred feet high, so that most of them would be killed or crippled by the fall. That way they sometimes got as many as three hundred buffalo on one drive. But that was before my time. On this hunt we were a pretty small party and we had a long way to go back with the meat, so we drove the buffalo into a corral and just took what we needed.

[262] When the hunt was over, the women came down and skinned the buffalo and butchered them. The first thing we ate was the

liver; we cut it into pieces and dipped it in gall and ate it raw. 224
Then for supper we boiled the tongues and roasted the ribs [262] [252]
beside a fire.

After we had all the buffalo we needed, we stayed around 648
the Cree camp for a while, drying meat and caring for the hides, [224]
and that's when Sitting Bull showed up for the first time. I had [251]
never seen Sitting Bull before, but I had heard about him plenty. It was said that his medicine was strong among the Sioux, but we Piegans didn't think much of him. Before the Sioux went into battle, Sitting Bull would make medicine for them so they couldn't be killed, but the Piegans killed them anyway. I knew plenty of Piegans who had the scalps of Sioux warriors Sitting Bull had made medicine for.

Maybe the Sioux thought Sitting Bull's medicine was strong because he never told them that the signs were right for battle unless the Sioux outnumbered their enemies by plenty. Sitting Bull was a medicine man, and some people say that he was a war chief too, but warriors of our tribe who had seen him in battle said that he was a coward. They said that he always stayed in the rear, making medicine, until the battle was over, and then if the Sioux had won the battle he would ride up and help chase the survivors. If the battle went against the Sioux, he was always the first one to ride away. He always rode a big horse that wasn't much good for battle but was plenty fast to run away on. [The Sioux generally had a preference for large horses.]

Sitting Bull showed up outside the Cree camp with two war chiefs and rode up and down and made sign talk, but nobody invited him into the camp because he had a reputation for being pretty tricky. So pretty soon Sitting Bull rode away, and he sure was mad. He yelled some insults and waved his tomahawk around and spit on the ground, and then he rode away.

Pretty soon after that the Piegans and the Bloods and the 648
Blackfoots packed their buffalo meat on travois drawn by 721
horses and started back westward toward home. When we were traveling through the Cypress Hills, south of Medicine Hat, in Canada, Sitting Bull and a large band of Sioux warriors showed up and galloped ahead and cut off our hunting party; and Sitting Bull was really looking for trouble. He was riding a big sorrel Army horse with the Army saddle and bridle still on it, and there were a lot of other Army horses among the Sioux. And the Sioux had lots of Army equipment—saddles,

648 bridles, canteens, swords, rifles, pistols—and some of them were
721 wearing parts of Army uniforms, so we knew they must have
had a big battle with the Cavalry. [The Battle of the Little
Big Horn, which took place in southeastern Montana, was
fought on June 25 of the preceding summer.]

Those Sioux were painted for war and they outnumbered
[195] us Blackfoots by plenty. [Painted for war is a Blackfoot metaphor,
meaning to be in an aggressive mood; it is doubtful
that any of the Sioux were wearing war paint.] And we had women and children with us, so Bull-Sits-Turning-Around, who was a Piegan and was head chief of our party, told us not to start anything with the Sioux and to avoid battle if we could. But Sitting Bull was sure acting as though he was looking for trouble, so we made a sort of corral out of the travois and the pack horses and put the women and children inside there. That was the best we could do because those Sioux had caught us right out in the open. Those women and children were sure scared.

All those Sioux had bows and arrows and lances, and a lot
of them had Army rifles too. We Piegans and Bloods and Black-
[411] foots had a few old muzzle-loaders with us, but they weren't
much use in a fight [the Blackfoots had by this time been by
[656] governmental order prohibited from obtaining ammunition for
those modern rifles which they possessed], but all the men in our party had their bows and arrows and lances and tomahawks, so we weren't afraid of any Sioux, no matter how many of them there were. You hear a lot about what great fighters the Sioux were, but this is because they killed Custer. The best thing the Sioux Nation ever did was to kill Custer, whom they called Yellow Hair. They say he was a brave fighter, but he had a bad reputation among the Indians for being a liar and for doing bad things to young Indian girls he captured. But
[186] the Sioux were not known as great fighters among the Plains
Indians. The Cheyennes were better fighters than the Sioux,
[181] and so were the Nez Percés and the Crows, but the Black-
foots were the best fighters on the Plains, and the Piegans
were the best fighters among the Blackfoots. I belonged to the
[614] Crazy Dog Clan of the Piegans, and we were the best fighters
of all. This is not just a brag. Anybody who was on the Plains in the old days will tell you it is true.

When Sitting Bull and his Sioux cut us off that day they could tell there were not very many of us, and they could tell

we were not a war party because we had women and children 648
with us and because the tails of the Piegan horses were long. 721
The other tribes called us Piegans the Bob-tail Horses, because [101]
when we went into battle our horses had short tails. But we [231]
didn't bob our horses' tails; we used to tie up their tails with strips of rawhide. The last thing we did before going into battle was to tie up the tails of our horses and then gallop around the camp.

This time I was riding my bay buffalo horse that I had marked with a hole in his ear, and when Sitting Bull started riding up and down and waving his tomahawk and calling insults and daring us Blackfoots to start something, I didn't have time to think about tying up my pony's tail. I just strung my buffalo bow and dropped my traveling saddle on the ground, because when we Piegans rode into battle we preferred to ride our ponies bareback.

Sitting Bull was acting pretty brave with all those Sioux behind him, and I guess he was still pretty mad because we didn't invite him into camp when we were with the Crees. So instead of staying in the back, he rode right out in front all by himself to make people think he was brave. He knew we were a hunting party and not looking for a fight, and so he rode up and down bragging about his big victory over the Cavalry and saying what he was going to do to us Blackfoots.

So this made us pretty mad, and some of us young warriors wanted to mix it up with the Sioux right then and there. But Bull-Sits-Turning-Around, who was the chief in charge of our hunting party, rode up and down amongst us and told us to calm down for a minute and use our heads. He knew that Sitting Bull wanted us to attack and chase him, because we wouldn't have much chance against all those Sioux with their Army rifles. Bull-Sits-Turning-Around said we weren't going to attack because we had the women and children to think about.
He said that if the Sioux attacked we would dismount and 726
make our stand in front of the place where the women and 648
children were.

The Piegans didn't fight the way it shows Indians fighting in 721
the movies. Sometimes we rode our horses on a raid, and sometimes we went a long way on foot and rode back on horses we had captured from the enemy. And many times when we were attacked we would dismount and lead our horses and fight on foot. The movies never show Indians fighting that way, but

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that was how we fought, and it was a good way to fight. You can shoot a lot straighter with your feet on the ground, and when the fighting is hand to hand you can move around a lot quicker on foot than on horseback. And when you have a good horse he helps you fight on foot as well as on his back, because it is pretty hard to put lance or tomahawk on a fellow who ducks around underneath his horse. More likely he pulls you off your horse and tomahawks you. And when two tribes are mixing it up on horseback they can't use bows and arrows very close anyway, because maybe they'll shoot one of their own warriors. Those Crows and those Cheyennes had good horses and they were good riders, but they never could lick the Piegans in a fight. And all those Sioux out there didn't want to attack the Piegans either, because they knew that even if they killed us all, there would be plenty of empty lodges in the Sioux camp that night.

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When Sitting Bull saw that the Piegans and Bloods and Blackfoots were not going to attack, he kept getting braver and braver and he rode pretty close to us and sat there on his big sorrel horse and called us cowards and women. And we got pretty sick of this, and Bull-Sits-Turning-Around was having a hard time keeping some of the young warriors from riding Sitting Bull down.

With us in our hunting party was Lazy Boy's elder brother, Young Bull. He was the son of Calf Looking, who preceded my father as head chief of the Skunk Band, and he had counted coup many times. He was riding a fast gray mare and he was wheeling and circling that mare so maybe you'd think he couldn't handle her [a favorite Piegan trick of war, I have since learned]. But he was a good rider, and when Sitting Bull got pretty close to where we were, Young Bull leaned way over on the neck of that mare and headed straight for Sitting Bull.

When the rest of us warriors saw this, we gave our war yells and started toward those Sioux, but Bull-Sits-Turning-Around called us back. He was pretty mad, and he said that he was still in charge and that we wouldn't attack those Sioux and leave those kids and women. Some Sioux had started toward us, too, and Sitting Bull wheeled his horse and tried to ride back toward those Sioux, but before he got that big sorrel Army horse turned around and running, Young Bull rode around the other side of him and grabbed his bridle and galloped right back to where we were. Some Sioux had got pretty close by 648 that time, but Sitting Bull knew that if we mixed it up then 721 he was sure to get killed, so he signaled with both hands for those Sioux to stay back.

When Young Bull brought Sitting Bull back to where we were, Bull-Sits-Turning-Around grabbed the tomahawk that Sitting Bull was carrying and hit him on the back with the flat of it. He said, "You've been bragging about what you're going to do to us. Now let's see you do something."

Then a Blackfoot named Runs-With-Buffalo grabbed the tomahawk and hit Sitting Bull with the flat of it and said, "Now, *Stá-mck-sho-pi*, you better get ready to eat your own tomahawk." ["Eat your tomahawk" is a literal translation from [195] the Blackfoot.] He would have killed old Sitting Bull right then and there, but Bull-Sits-Turning-Around stopped him.

All this time, Sitting Bull was making signs with both arms telling the Sioux not to attack, and he sure looked scared to death. He knew that if there was a fight he would be the first one to taste a Piegan tomahawk [again a literal translation].

Sitting Bull was carrying a riding whip tied to his wrist by a leather thong, and pretty soon Young Bull took the whip away from Sitting Bull and hit him across the face with it and then rode right to those Sioux. This man named Young Bull was one of the toughest warriors among all the Blackfoot Nation, and his name is told many times in stories about brave warriors. This time he rode right amongst those Sioux and told them in the Sioux tongue that they were not warriors just because they had licked the Cavalry. He told those Sioux that those cavalry soldiers couldn't fight, but pretty soon they were going to see how the Blackfoots could fight. Then he rode among them and struck their horses with the whip and struck some of them with the whip and dared them to do their worst. He told those Sioux that they could attack anytime, because the Piegans were ready for them. Then he told them if they did attack, Tah-táhng-iotáhngeh—that was the Sioux name for Sitting Bull—would get the first tomahawk. Then Young Bull rode back to where the Blackfoots were and hit Sitting Bull with the whip again.

All the time this was going on, Sitting Bull was making peace signs to the Sioux so they wouldn't attack, and he was making peace talk to the Piegans. He was begging the Piegans to let

648 721 him go, and he was so scared I thought he was going to soil his breech clout. Maybe he did—I don't know about that, and I don't want to make a lie by telling something I'm not sure about. But we couldn't let Sitting Bull free because if we did then he would tell his Sioux to attack us. And if we killed him, then the Sioux would attack us because they were not all cowards like Sitting Bull. And if they attacked us those women and children hiding behind those pack horses wouldn't have a chance.

The place where we were was a valley, and there were three coulees that ran down to that place. And pretty soon there were clouds of dust rising up from those coulees, and everybody was watching those big clouds of dust. And when Sitting Bull saw those clouds of dust he really got scared, because Bull-Sits-Turning-Around, who was in charge of our party, told him that dust was from warriors riding down from the main camp of the Bloods and the Blackfoots and the Piegans. Bull-Sits-Turning-Around said to Sitting Bull, "You were looking for a fight and pretty soon you're going to have a good fight because here come the rest of our warriors from the main camp."

Sitting Bull had no stomach for battle when he was in danger, and now he thought my father Last Gun was coming with the Crazy Dog warriors who had taken an oath never to retreat in battle and the other Piegan warrior clans and the Blackfoots and Bloods, so he begged Bull-Sits-Turning-Around to let him go. He said he had no quarrel with the Blackfoot Nation, and he said if we let him go he would leave in peace and never war against the Blackfoots.

So everybody who was near Sitting Bull hit him with their whips and their bows and their lance shafts, and then we let him go. And Sitting Bull joined up with those Sioux and kept on riding and didn't even slow down for as long as we could see him. He just kept riding as fast as he could, with those Sioux strung out behind him and riding as fast as they could.

We were sure sorry we had to let Sitting Bull go, but if we had killed him the Sioux would have attacked, and we had women and children with us and we were few in number and Bull-Sits-Turning-Around didn't want to fight if he could help it. So we let Sitting Bull go so he could get far away before he found out that those clouds of dust were just some buffalo stampeding down those coulees. There weren't any more Piegans or Bloods or Blackfoots for a long way yet.

54: Lancaster F-3(1958-1966)1966 NF6 Blackfoot NF6
Piegan
Montana

If Sitting Bull had been a brave man, he would have signaled 648 ●
his war chiefs to attack and make a fight of it, even if he was 721
in danger himself. But he was a coward who only did battle when he was safe, and who counted coup only on dead warriors, and so he ran from a small hunting party of Piegans and Bloods and Blackfoots, and a herd of stampeding buffalo.

If I had at any time been inclined to doubt the complete veracity 622
of any of the Chief's stories or statements, I certainly would have 151
had my comeuppance this afternoon. When I was up last time, the
Chief mentioned that not too long ago, when he was a youngster 411
in his fifties and sixties and was chief of Indian Police, he could ride [625]
a horse at full speed and shoot snowbirds off the fenceposts with his pistol. At the time, I considered this an eyebrow-raising feat, especially since he said that he seldom missed. But today, as we were discussing guns and shooting, Jimmy suddenly said, "Oh, that's a remind me," and he went into his room and came back with a photograph that was taken last year while the Chief and Jim were paying a visit to Washington State. They had been attending a police pistol meet, and the Chief had been invited to try his hand on the twenty-yard range. And the Chief, at the age of 104, with a .38 calibre pistol he had never before fired—and not having shot any kind of handgun in many years—calmly shot the middle out of the target. Jim says that the photo and the story appeared in the Seattle *Post-Intelligencer* and in other West Coast publications. A couple of the bullets had strayed slightly outside the center of the bull's-eye, and the Chief remarked that he is afraid he doesn't see quite so well as he used to. What a man! What a man! And I used to think that Winston Churchill was the greatest man of our times.

Later in the afternoon the wind abated somewhat and we all 122
went to town. No mail. I bought a snow tire. Bumped into Earl Old Person and he asked me to come to his house Saturday night to do some recording.

Back at the ranch the fires had gone out and it was *cold* in the house. But Jim fired up both stoves and pretty soon it was *too* hot.

I had bought some steak in town, and Jim cooked it for supper. For some reason he decided to boil it, which made it gray and tough. The broth was good though, but I wish I could forget Jim's cognative association. "*Ko-piss,*" indeed!

It was a long day for the Chief, and directly after supper he went to bed. Jim and I sat around and bulled as usual. Jim can be quite

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culture should have been retained by the isolated Blackfoots in a 825
form more pure than that found among those Algonkins who remained 776
in the East and were thus subjected to the cultural influence 171
of other Indian groups and of course to that of the various
European groups which colonized in that area. I am especially intrigued
by the fact that even today some of the older Blackfoots, [782]
when crossing a body of water, will offer gifts to the spirits upon
whose domain they are trespassing. Usually the offering to the Underwater
Spirits is in the form of tobacco—a sack of Bull Durham
or a cigarette—but this gesture certainly evokes thoughts of the ancient
mariners (not only the Norsemen but the Ancient Greeks)
pouring libations upon the waters in petition for a safe voyage.
Even today, the Underwater Spirits are very real to those Blackfoots 825
who cling to the old beliefs, and although some of the younger 776
Blackfoots do not hesitate to trap the Beaver Persons and the Otter 224
Persons, the old-timers still prefer to purchase their ceremonial 439
water-animal skins from the barbaric Crees.

There is certainly a great deal of factual information with which 121
to link Blackfoot culture to that of the ancient Norsemen (e.g., the
Blackfoot sweat lodge is identical in appearance and function to
the rustic Scandinavian sauna bath, and the Blackfoots switch themselves
with a buffalo tail exactly as the Scandinavians smack themselves
with birch branches), but our best clues as to the origin of
the Blackfoots exist probably in Blackfoot legend. Tonight, after we 538
had discussed the Underwater Persons, the Chief told me a richly
interesting history of an event which had taken place "a long time
ago" (when the Chief says a long time ago he means a *really* long
time ago) when all the Blackfoots lived "far to the north." This legend
may imply, among other things, the first breaking away of the
Piegans from the main body of Blackfoots. The hero of the story is
a man called Round Scabby Robe, who received his power from
the Underwater Persons, the Beaver Persons. The word "Piegan"—
which most writers transcribe from the Blackfoot as "Pekuni" or
"Pecunnie" but which is correctly pronounced either [pikā́ni] or
[píkā́ñi] according to linguistic environment—means Scabby Robe.

WHY THE PIEGANS KILL THE SNAKE PERSONS

A long, long time ago, when all the Blackfoots lived far up in 539
the North, they did not kill the Snake Persons [the Shoshoni 648
Indians] or make war on them. Each year when the waters
became warm [probably in July or early August], the chiefs

539 of the Blackfoots and the chiefs of the Snake Persons would
648 meet at the Big River. [The Chief used the term, *Ó-mach-K'tai:*
[103] Big River, and since this is the Blackfoot name for the Missouri
River, I believe that the reference was to the Missouri and not
to the body of water located west of the Rockies which is today
known as Big River.] When they met in the water of the
Ó-mach-K'tai, the chiefs of the two nations would count coup by
[555] touching each other lightly with their lances. Each time they
touched one another they would shout their coups back to their
own camps, and that night each camp would have a victory
celebration as though there had been a real battle instead of
just a friendly ceremony. The next day, the two nations would
exchange gifts, and then each would go its separate way,
singing.

539 It was customary in those days that when the Blackfoots had
[291] a dance each girl should dress in the manner of her husband
or sweetheart; in this way, everybody could tell whose woman
she was. The men displayed their war honors by decorating
[554] their belongings with the white winter skin of the weasel [the
[825] Blackfoots believed the weasel to be the most courageous of
all wild animals], and by wearing in their hair the feathers of
[301] the hawk and of the eagle. But since it was not proper for a
woman to wear feathers, the Blackfoot ladies attended the
dances with their hair decorated instead with braids of *ah-pu-tú-yis* [white grass].

There was at this time among the Blackfoots a young man known as Áh-pi-koh-koh-mi-nim-mah: Round Scabby Robe. Round Scabby Robe was pretty much the camp buffoon; he was not a good hunter, he had no war honors, and his only robe was a scabby old hide which he had cut into the shape of a circle. Round Scabby Robe was too poor to take a wife, but he was secretly in love with the youngest wife—the "far-away" wife—of the head chief, and she in turn was in love with Round Scabby Robe.

595 [Although a Blackfoot man—especially if he were a chief—
might have several wives, his various spouses were not con-
539 sidered to share positions of equal privilege in his lodge. A
definite hierarchy of both social prestige and household authority existed among the good ladies, top dog being the "sits-by-him," wife (so called because she was the one who sat nearest her husband at social and religious functions). Next in line was the "takes-care-of-him" wife, and so on down the ladder until

In the spring of the year we come out 539
from our lodges, and if we see enemies, 825
we dive back down beneath the water. (533)

The words of the second song were:

In the spring of the year we come out
from our lodges, and if we see enemies,
we do our best to save our lives.

Then the Chief Beaver said, "When you meet your enemies you must first sing these songs, and then you must chant four times, *yuh! yuh! yuh! yuh!*"

So the Chief Beaver gave Round Scabby Robe the small stick, but first he wrapped the stick in cattail leaves and admonished Round Scabby Robe never to place the stick upon the ground but always to place it on a buffalo chip. He said, "If ever the stick touches water or swampy ground it will immediately turn into a young beaver, so never allow the stick to become damp unless you wish to evoke the full power of the Beaver Medicine which the stick represents."

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Round Scabby Robe accepted the stick then, and as he was about to leave the lodge the small white beaver came and whispered once again into his ear. He said, "Soon you will have occasion to use the power of the stick. When next the Blackfoots and the Snake Persons meet at the water of *Ó-mach-k'tai*, Big Top, Chief of the Snake Persons, while pretending to touch the Blackfoot Chief with his lance, will treacherously attempt to kill him instead. You must save your chief by meeting Big Top in the water and fighting him. Sing your medicine songs, and tie the small stick across your chest, and then Big Top will not be able to harm you because my power is too strong for him. Big Top will be wearing his hair in two braids, and at the front of his head he will have a large topknot decorated on the one side with white shells and on the other with black shells. After you have killed him, you should take his scalp. If you do these things, you will become a great warrior and a chief."

So Round Scabby Robe returned to his people, and he told his plans to his partner. He said, "Partner, Big Top is going to try to kill our chief, but I am going to save our chief's life by meeting Big Top in the water and fighting him. After I have killed him I will take his scalp, and since you are my partner I will share the scalp with you. Some of our other warriors will

539 attempt to take the scalp from me, but I will fool them by em-
•648 ploying the same trick which the Beaver Persons employ in fooling their enemies. Our people will be waiting down the river from the crossing where I will kill Big Top, and I will dive under the water headed downstream. But underwater I will turn and swim upstream instead, so you must wait for me upstream."

And that is the way it happened. Big Top charged the Blackfoot Chief, but Round Scabby Robe made his ceremony and rushed into the water to fight with Big Top. Big Top threw his lance, but it glanced harmlessly off the small stick that Round Scabby Robe was wearing across his chest, and then Round Scabby Robe killed Big Top with a flint knife and scalped him and divided the scalp with his partner.

That night the Blackfoots had a victory dance, and as Round Scabby Robe's sweetheart danced she carried the scalp of Big Top. She was very proud.

After the dance, Round Scabby Robe gave the scalp to the head chief and said, "I want your far-away wife to become my sits-by-him wife."

The head chief said, "You are a great warrior and someday you will be a great chief. I am proud to have you for a relative."

From that time on, the Blackfoots and the Snake Persons were enemies, and since that time they kill one another and take one another's scalps.

538 Since the English translation of the Blackfoot word for "Piegan" means "Scabby Robe," I assume that in Blackfoot legendry Round Scabby Robe is given credit for having established the Piegan Tribe of the Blackfoot Nation. No further mention was made by the Chief of the partner with whom Round Scabby Robe shared the scalp of Big Top, but it is possible that in Blackfoot legend he was first chief of the Bloods (who refer to themselves as the Many Chiefs, not the Bloods), the third major division of the Blackfoot Nation. If so, this portion of the narrative has been lost in the telling.

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538 I was in a veritable rapture of fascination over receiving so much priceless material from the Chief, and the Chief was obviously enjoying telling the stories, so I asked him if he would tell me some of his own warpath experiences. He appeared willing enough, and at last I learned the story of his first war parties.

122 didn't stay with me very well, and by supper I was starved and ate a hell of a lot of moose meat. I was quite surprised that both Jim and the Chief were enthusiastic about the mustard greens, stewed tomatoes and canned apricots that I added to the menu. I had supposed them merely tolerant of the fruits and vegetables which I have been forcing upon the table, but in future I shall no longer hesitate to act as dietitian.

122 538 The Chief ate marvelously, grunted away from the table, and immediately went to sleep on the sofa. Jim spun some tales until eight o'clock, at which time the Chief arose refreshed and ready to tell us some stories about early and contemporary Indian politics. Most of the stories were fragmented or, at best, anecdotal, but the one story that did have any form was really a good one: this story concerned a diplomatic mission to Washington which the Chief and Plenty Treaty had undertaken in 1935. Although the narrative was [522] [537] at times very funny—most of the laughs were at the expense of Mr. Plenty Treaty, I am afraid—I prized it less as a sample of the Chief's humor than as an indication of his fantastic memory for detail and his remarkable powers as an orator (I think that the Chief's comparing his pockets to arrow quivers should be set down among the great oratorical metaphors of all time).

THE BIG CLAIM

●648 The Government owed us several million dollars for some land that they had taken from us, and for many years we had been trying to collect what was owed to us. Finally we hired a lawyer in Washington, D.C. He was the same age as I, and we Indians called him Bear Head. [Bear Head would be Mr. Serven, of the law firm, Serven, Joyce, Barlow and Goodman.]

It all happened this way: One day Bob Hamilton, the official interpreter for our tribe, informed me that there was to be an important meeting down at Helena. For the previous four years we had been attempting unrelentingly but without success to present our claim before the Federal Government, and this Helena conference was the result of a communication which I had sent to [United States Senator] B. K. Wheeler. B. K. Wheeler and his [law] partner were to be at the Helena meeting along with Bear Head and another official from Washington whom we called Morning Eagle. Also to be represented at the meeting were the Flatheads, the Gros Ventres, the Assiniboines, the Sioux and the Crows. Delegates from the Piegans included, besides myself, Big Spring, Wolf Plume, Rides-At-The-Door, and several others. 648

The meeting at Helena had been arranged in order for the Indians to receive information from the Washington officials regarding the proper way to go about presenting our Big Claim, but instead of giving us advice, the officials asked us a question. One of the officials stood up and said, "If any among you can answer this question, let him speak. The Blackfoots were once a great nation, but they are no longer great. They are few in number, and so are the other tribes represented here. How, then, do you propose to fight your claim against the mighty United States Government?"

Our delegation talked together then, and Wolf Plume said, "We came here to receive advice, but instead of giving us advice the White Man has given us a question. What shall we do? Who will answer for us?"

At this point I got up and went outside to get a drink of water. I had a little money in my side pants pockets, but while I was outside I took everything out of my side pockets so that they were empty. Then I went back inside and announced that I would speak for my people. I said, "You have asked us a question, and although I do not know whether I can answer your question satisfactorily, I will try. I am not able even to read or write or to speak your language, but I will do my best to answer for my people.

"In the old days, when we made war on the other tribes, and conquered the land you later took away from us, our warriors carried a bow and two quivers full of arrows." I pulled my side pockets inside out, and continued: "These are my quivers. In the old days my quivers held arrows, because in those times we fought with arrows. But nowadays one can no longer fight with arrows; nowadays one must fight with money, and you can clearly see that the quivers which should hold the money with which to fight for my people are empty. If you want me to be able to fight, then fill my empty quivers. Fill my empty quivers with money, and then I will be able to fight."

For a minute nobody said anything, and then B. K. Wheeler's partner said, "I will put one hundred dollars into your quivers so that you can fight through representatives in Washington." Then B. K. Wheeler gave one hundred dollars, and so did the other official, Morning Eagle. Then the Gros Ventres put in fifty dollars to provide stationery and other supplies that we

● 648 would need. Finally it was agreed that I would go to Washington, with Bob Hamilton as interpreter, to put our Big Claim before the Government.

So the meeting was over, and our delegation went back to Browning to prepare for our mission to Washington. But before we were ready to leave, Bob Hamilton, our interpreter, passed away.

Bob Hamilton's death left me without an interpreter, so I asked several English-speaking Blackfoots to go to Washington with me. At various times, certain individuals agreed to go, but at the last minute every one of them backed out. Finally one night I gave a Medicine Smoke, a ceremony among the men. Louis Bear Child, also called Plenty Treaty, was present, and it was to him that I spoke: "You speak English well, and I want you to go to Washington with me to assist in representing our people. Do not refuse, as I ask in the name of our people. I know that you are a poor man and that you cannot afford to make this journey, but if you will agree to go, my young son, Jim, and I will pay your expenses out of our own pockets."

648 657 Plenty Treaty agreed to go, and we informed our Superintendent, Mr. O'Hara, that we wished permission to go to *Sik-koi-yis* [Black Lodge], which is our Blackfoot name for Washington, D.C. Mr. O'Hara, whom we called Good Dancer, agreed to let us go, and one very cold winter day, with a blizzard blowing, my boy Jim drove Plenty Treaty and me to the railroad depot in a sleigh. At first the ticket agent would not sell us our tickets; he called Good Dancer on the telephone and asked him whether we had permission to leave, and only then did he sell us our tickets. [Technically, to this very day no American Indian can leave his reservation without the specific permission of the superintendent; this fact, along with numerous others of similar nature, might profitably be made known to those *ignorantes* who are currently militating for a strict adherence by the Federal Government to the very letter of the
648 old Indian treaties.] Then my son Jim shook hands with us and wished us good luck, and we started on our journey.

I had a lot of respect for Plenty Treaty for making the trip with me, but when we got on the train I felt sad because the poor chap was dressed so shabbily. His shoes were far too large for him, and his toes were sticking out of holes worn in the shoe tops; he was wearing an old leather jacket that was nothing short of pathetic, and his cap wasn't worth owning. At that

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time he did not have any braids, but he needed a hair-cut very badly. He certainly did not look like a diplomat on his way to Washington, and I was so embarrassed by his appearance that I would not go to the dining car but instead had our food served in our compartment.

When we got to Chicago I had Plenty Treaty telephone Washington and tell our attorney, Bear Head, that we would be arriving the next day. The train was supposed to arrive in Washington the following morning at 10:00, but it did not get there until the middle of the afternoon.

As soon as we stepped off the train, a Colored chauffeur in a maroon uniform approached and asked whether I was Mr. White Calf. Plenty Treaty told him that I was, and he drove us in a big car to a place where a number of officials were waiting to have lunch with us. Bear Head was among them, and he greeted us and said, "We have been waiting for you since morning, and we are about starved. Before we do anything else, let us eat." I glanced at Plenty Treaty. He had not brought even a spare shirt, and by this time he was so disheveled that I was truly embarrassed for him. But there was no way of avoiding the situation, so we went ahead and ate lunch with the officials.

When the food was served, Bear Head turned to me and said, "Which way do you want to eat, White Man style or Indian style?"

I said, "The way you eat is up to you; as for myself, I will eat Indian style."

Then Bear Head asked the other officials in which manner they preferred to eat, and they all said that they would eat Indian style. So that is the way we ate our food, not using forks but just knives and fingers. It was a good meal, but I noticed that every once in a while some of the officials would sneak a glance at Plenty Treaty. He was really a pitiful sight.

After the meal, I told Bear Head that I would be in his office in two hours' time to talk about the claim money. Then I took Plenty Treaty out and bought him some new clothes and threw his old rags in a garbage can. Next I took him to a barbershop, and you wouldn't believe that a haircut and a new suit of clothes could make that much difference in a person's appearance! By the time he walked through the door into Bear Head's office, Plenty Treaty had become a very handsome man indeed.

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From Bear Head's office, Plenty Treaty and I went to the office of John Collier, Commissioner of Indian Affairs. We were accompanied by Bear Head's son, Four Bears. [According to my best information, "Four Bears" was Mr. Joyce, the young assistant and adoptive son of Mr. Serven, or, as the Blackfoots called him, "Bear Head."]

When we arrived at Mr. Collier's office, I said, "Mr. Commissioner, I did not come here to complain about the Superintendent of the Blackfoot Reservation or about the Bureau of Indian Affairs here in Washington. I came here for the sole purpose of obtaining the claim money which is the rightful due of my people." Collier appeared very annoyed and very impatient. He said that I should turn around and go back home and that he would see to it that the money was sent to our people in due time. I said, "No! I will not go back home without that claim money in my pocket! You know as well as I that my father, who was Chief White Calf before me, died right here in Washington some time ago. [Actually, the old Chief White Calf died in Washington in 1903 in the private chambers of the President.] If necessary, I will die here too. I will stay here until my money runs out, and if I have no more money I will take an old blanket and sleep in the streets and eat garbage. But I will not leave Washington without that claim money! I will die here, if there is no other way, and if I do die here, the whole world will know that two Chief White Calfs died in Washington fighting for the rights of their people. The whole world will know that the Old Chief White Calf and his son, the New Chief White Calf, both died in Washington trying to collect the money that is the rightful property of their people." Once more I repeated it to Commissioner Collier: "Remember, my father died right here in Washington, and I will do the same. I will starve here before I will turn around like a whipped dog and go home." Then I walked out of the room.

When we got back to Bear Head's office, Bear Head asked us what had happened in the Commissioner's office, so I told him to ask his son, Four Bears. Four Bears told his father everything I had said to the Commissioner, and then he turned to me and said, "You've really got old Collier thinking now. You've really got him hanging on a nail. I'll bet he'll call you tomorrow."

The next morning between eight and nine o'clock, Collier called on the telephone and asked me to come back to his office. So Plenty Treaty and I went to Bear Head's office and from there the same three of us—Plenty Treaty, Four Bears and I—went back to Collier's office. As soon as we arrived, it was apparent that Commissioner Collier had changed his attitude; he met us at the door with a handshake, and he acted very friendly and congenial. "Well," he said, "have you changed your mind yet about going home?"

I said, "No, I have not!" Then I picked up a book that was on the top of his desk and said to him, "Listen to what I say! The White puts his laws and his treaties and his promises in a book, and then when they no longer sound good to him, he simply erases them." I picked up a pencil and marked four Xs on a piece of paper on his desk, and then with the other end of the pencil I erased the four Xs. "That is what the White Man does," I said. "He uses whichever end of the pencil happens to please him at the moment. But that is not the Indian way. The words I spoke yesterday are not on paper; they are in my mind and in my heart, and they cannot be erased away. And my words are the same today as they were yesterday."

Still apparently in a pleasant mood, the Commissioner led us from his office and showed us through a small Indian museum in the building. Then he took us back to his office, took a key from his desk drawer, and showed us into another room which contained a safe. Opening the safe, he took out a small metal box, and handing me the key he told me to open the box. I did so, finding that inside the box was a piece of blue paper—a cheque—which the Commissioner asked me to take out and hand to him. Then Commissioner Collier pointed at me with the cheque and said, "You were lucky. You got what you came for. When you go home, you will be taking the claim money back to your people."

Each of the Blackfoot Tribes represented at the Helena meeting got a share of the claim money. The Piegans had a pretty good share to begin with, but the Government held out a lot of money. They charged us for everything they had given us from the Treaty of 1855 right up to the present time. They made us pay for the gifts they had given the chiefs in the old days before I was even born, and they went so far as to charge us for the time they moved the Rocky Boys onto our land without our permission. Then the lawyers took out ten percent for their share, and we didn't have much left.

Commissioner Collier told me that there was one hundred dollars apiece for each member of our tribe, and he asked me

648 if I wanted to take the whole amount back to the people. I told him no. I told him that I would take eighty-five dollars for each Piegan and leave the rest of the money in Washington to draw interest. Later on I tried to get the rest of this money, [643] but by that time the Tribal Council was handling business affairs for the Tribe and the money had disappeared. Joe Brown, the mixed-blood chairman of the Council, said that the money had been used to buy horses and wagons for the old people, but I never saw the horses or wagons.

175 648 Records of transactions between the United States Government and the various American Indian tribes can at times be very difficult to obtain. Aside from word of mouth verification by the Blackfoots that the Chief did indeed go to Washington in 1935 and obtain $85.00 for each tribal member, my many attempts to obtain specific information relating to the Blackfoots' "Big Claim" earned only two pieces of evidence. The following brief and at times uncertain information is from the Social and Economic Branch, Office of Civil Archives, Washington, D.C.

> The publication entitled *Report with respect to the House Resolution Authorizing the Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs to Conduct an Investigation of the Bureau of Indian Affairs* (Union Calendar No. 790, House Report No. 2503, 82nd Congress, 2nd Session, 1953) shows that on July 10, 1925 the Blackfeet, Blood and Piegan Indians filed with the United States Court of Claims, a claim for $71,338,278.10 (Docket No. E-427). This amount was claimed as the value of lands taken and as reparation for the loss of hunting and fishing rights. The claim was allowed on April 10, 1933 and a judgment of $622,465.57 was awarded to the Indians (81 C. Cls. 101).
>
> Although the claim was allowed in 1933 rather than 1935, this probably is the claim in which you are interested. According to the *Report* the Blackfeet had filed only one other claim. On August 9, 1951, the Blackfeet and Gros Ventres filed a claim with the Indian Claims Commission (Docket No. 279). It is possible that the judgment of $622,465.57 was not paid to the Indians until 1935. The part of the award that was actually paid to the Blackfeet is not given in the *Report*. Since the Blood and Piegan Indians are part of the Blackfoot Confederacy, the judgment may not have been broken down.

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Another and more enlightening document (from an unofficial source which I shall not divulge) was an onion-skin copy of a report entitled "SUMMARY OF GRATUITIES CHARGED AGAINST 1935 JUDGMENT, BLACKFEET." The first page of this document reads as follows:

PURPOSE OF PAYMENTS	AMOUNT
1. Excess paid for purposes enumerated in Articles 9 and 10 of Treaty of 1855	$ 58,535.29
2. Gratuities from October 17, 1855 to June 30, 1873	130,616.16
3. Gratuities from July 1, 1863 to June 30, 1927	2,765,239.61
4. Gratuities from 1910 to 1915 (during period Rocky Boy's Band was attached to Agency—percentage chargeable to Blackfeet	130,530.27
5. Balance of amount expended for surveying and allotting lands on Blackfeet Reservation	73,343.47
6. Amounts expended for purpose enumerated in unratified Treaty of July 13, 1868	852,036.71
7. Education of Indian children at non-agency schools	21,854.10
Total	4,032,155.61

With regard to the above cited statistics, I feel that the following statements are in order:

With regard to sections two and three (2. and 3.), an obvious overlapping of time periods exists.

With regard to section four (4.), the "Rocky Boy's Band"—a polyglot assortment of displaced Canadian Crees, Chippewas and mixed-bloods—was allotted land on the Piegan Reservation without the consent of the Piegans; following lengthy and vehement protest by the Piegans, the Rocky Boys (so named after the Chippewa Chief, Rocky Boy) were removed from Piegan territory, but the United States Government charged *the Piegans* with the expense of moving the Rocky Boys onto the Reservation, surveying and allotting them land, issuing them commodities and other benefits, and, as if that were not bad enough, further charged the Piegans with the expense of moving the Rocky Boys *off* of Piegan land. The Rocky Boys are now located on a federal reserve south of Havre, Montana.

The second page of the document is headed, "BREAKDOWN OF GRATUITIES DEDUCTED FROM BLACKFEET SHARE OF 1935 JUDGMENT," but although the first summary deduction (1.) was specific in regard to the amount right down to the last twenty-nine cents, no further breakdown of this deduction is offered. Deduction Number Two (2.), however, is offered in greater detail, and is so enlightening as to be worth passing along.

2. Gratuities from October 17, 1855 to June 30, 1873		130,616.16
Clothing	419.00	
Provisions	3,205.62	
Work & Stock Animals	430.00	
Feed & care of Livestock	292.50	
Hardware	14.72	
Fuel	518.00	
Pay of Misc. Employees	280.25	
Agricultural aid	210.75	
Misc. Agency expenses	11,777.07	
Agency Bldgs. & Repairs	1,201.80	
Pay of Interpreters	3,663.52	
Pay of agents	16,344.26	
Presents	3,223.54	
Transportation, etc. of supplies	89,034.23	
	130,616.16	

This breakdown is largely self-explanatory, but certain of its features should be given careful note. (1) The Piegans were charged $3,223.54 for "Presents." A present, in my book, is something you give to a person, not something for which you send his grandchildren a bill. (2) The total declared value of all goods supplied to the Piegans (the "Blackfeet") during this period, including clothing, provisions, work and stock animals, hardware, *and* "presents," was $7,292.88, whereas the charge to the Piegans for "Transportation, etc. of supplies" was $89,034.23—*more than ten times the value of the goods that were transported.* And brother, that is either one hell of a big transportation charge or one hell of a big "etc." (3) In view of the fact that the fuel for which the Piegans were billed was not fuel which the Indians used but fuel used by Agency employees,

I find it rather hard to swallow an additional billing of $11,777.07 175
for "Misc. Agency expenses." 648

As I read on through the additional three pages of "BREAKDOWN OF GRATUITIES DEDUCTED FROM BLACKFEET SHARE OF 1935 JUDGMENT" it became apparent that the poor Piegans had been "Misc."ed and "Etc."ed to death. The next section ("3. Gratuities from July 1, 1868 to June 30, 1927"), which overlaps "2.," cuts the charge for "Presents" down to a mere "$567.10" but more than makes up for this oversight with other charges. In this section, a total of thirty-four separate charges against the Blackfoot share of the claim judgment are made, resulting in a loss of income to the Indians in the staggering amount of $2,765,239.61. A fair sampling of the charges in this section follows.

Fuel	34,826.79
Agency bldgs. & Repairs	99,925.39
Pay of Misc. employees	166,420.46
Misc. Agency expenses	43,822.78
Transportation, etc. of supplies	376,939.06
Indian dwellings	38.50

Four more sections follow, all pretty much the same, but perhaps the most pathetic charge of all is right here in section three (3.), which includes the period of the Starvation Year. At the bottom of one of the pages is a charge of $1,344.40 for "Burial of Indians." First the Piegans were starved to death, then they were forced to accept methods of burial which were in conflict with their religious belief, and then they were forced to pay for their own funerals. God help us!

It is now almost 11:00 P.M. We drank our bourbon during the story-telling. The Chief has gone out back to touch second base before retiring. By the time he gets back, I should have completed the typing of these few pages, and I think that by that time we will all be ready to roll in. I have reached that linguistic plateau at which, from now on, the learning of Blackfoot should be relatively easy. 122

were stolen from a Blood named White Elk, and White Elk, who 721
suspected (and correctly so) that the horses had been run off by a 726
party of Gros Ventres from the United States, demanded of Blood 657
Agent William Pocklington that he be allowed to lead a retaliatory raid across the "Medicine Line."

When White Elk persisted in his demand, Agent Pocklington at length issued passes to five Bloods and one North Blackfoot to travel to Fort Assiniboine, Montana Territory, in order to petition through proper authorities for the return of White Elk's stolen property. The delegation of Indians never completed their journey. A few weeks after their departure, in a hastily dug trench near the Sweetgrass Hills, a Blood named Big Wolf discovered the scalped and mutilated bodies of all six men.

At first the killers of the six Blackfoots were unknown: one rumor 721
blamed the slaughter on White ranchers; another attributed it to 726
American Cavalrymen who had caught the Indians killing cattle. But when word was received that Gros Ventres had performed a scalp dance within sight of the American soldiers at Ft. Assiniboine, all doubt was removed. Only an unseasonably early and very heavy snow prevented the Blackfoot war chiefs from leading a full-scale retaliatory raid across the Line against the offending tribe, and during the uneasy days which followed, Agent Pocklington presented the following report to his superintendent:

> The younger Indians have decided among themselves to start for the Gros Ventre reserve as soon as the snow goes off the ground and revenge the deaths of their comrades. I am informed the party will muster four hundred strong.

All winter long the peaceful Head Chief of the Bloods, Red Crow, labored to dissuade his warriors from undertaking to slaughter the outnumbered Gros Ventres. But the following spring, just when it appeared that Red Crow's influence was making itself felt, Agent Pocklington had occasion to send the following urgent wire to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs:

> Party of Indians stole eighty horses from Upper Agency Saturday night. Red Crow heaviest loser. Red Crow and large party pursuing them. Supposed to be Assiniboines and Gros Ventres.

The chiefs of the Blackfoot Nation have always been known for 648
their high intelligence, and although Red Crow failed to overtake

721 726 648 the raiders and recover his horses, it was he who suggested to the Indian Department that the only way to avoid wholesale slaughter would be to inaugurate a formal treaty among the tribes at conflict. Only about half of the Bloods were in favor of the treaty, and the Assiniboines were not much disposed to sign, but eventually the influence of Red Crow and of the head chief of the Gros Ventres, Lame Bull, prevailed and at Fort Belknap, Montana, on June 9, the Treaty of 1887 was successfully concluded.

648 721 Peace had been restored, but in the hearts of young Blood warriors still burned a fierce desire to avenge their murdered companions. The young Bloods had agreed to honor the treaty of their chief with the Gros Ventres and Assiniboines, but to the east were the Cree, and far to the south lay the camps of the ancient enemy of the Blackfoot, the Crow. The old ways were not yet dead. One more time the warriors of the Blackfoot Nation would strike their enemies and return to the camps on Belly River singing songs of triumph. One final time the Bloods and the Blackfoots and the Piegans would wear the black paint of victory. One last scalp dance, and there would be an end.

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301
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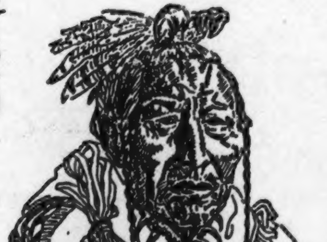
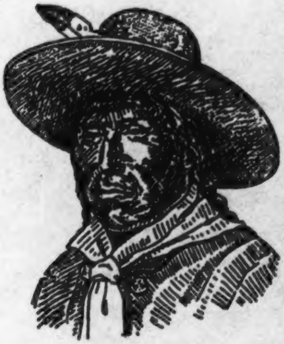


Calf Robe in Later Life



Young Pine

721

THE LAST SCALP DANCE

I had for quite some while been visiting the Blood camp on Belly River, over in Canada [the camp was located in the Belly River flats near the present site of Stand Off, Alberta]. I was

scattered like quail without even grabbing their weapons. 721
They sure chewed me out about shooting without warning them first, but of course I could not have warned them without spooking the antelope. When they chewed me out I said, "Well, I got him didn't I? Now we can eat."

By this time we were so hungry that we had to be care- 721
ful how we went about eating. We ate the raw liver as we 252
dressed out the antelope, but before even beginning to cook the 262
muscle meat we all drank some blood soup. We took the paunch of the antelope and filled it with blood and tied it at both ends so that it would not leak. Then we dug a small pit, lined it with the skin of the antelope, and filled it with water. We made the water boil by dropping in stones heated in the fire, and into the boiling water we placed the paunch of blood to cook. After we had drunk the soup we began to cook the meat, and by the time the meat was cooked we all had good appetites and could eat as much as we pleased without getting sick.

Our next stop was at a lake on the flat south of Shelby. We 721
killed a beef here, and using the beef hide and some sinew I was carrying, we made moccasins. By this time I was completely barefooted, and none of the other fellows was much better off. We didn't even remove the hair from the hide. We made our moccasins from the green hide just as it came off the cow.

We stopped only long enough to make moccasins and cook some meat, then turned north and finally camped at a small lake near the present site of the town of Sunburst. We considered that our war party was over now and that from here we would go on home, so it was here that we held our victory dance. We took turns at singing, and while one fellow sang the
others danced. We blackened our faces with charcoal from our [822]
fire [black paint is Blackfoot victory paint], and those boys sure did look pretty with their faces all painted up that way.

We later learned that both the United States Army and the [648]
N.W.M.P. had been alerted to intercept our war party, but we managed to slip past them all. Upon leaving the site of our victory dance, we traveled until dawn and then hid out all the next day. On the following night we passed Magrath and arrived back at the Pine Tree. Here we had another small celebration, and after resting for a while in a patch of choke-

handle of his briefcase, but I now discovered that I had been mistaken.] 727

A short while later, Red Crow [Head Chief of the Bloods] 657 came down and told me that the Mounties were looking for 727 me. He advised me to turn myself in to the Agent, so I did, whereupon the Mounties chained me in a Red River cart and [622] took me to the stockade at Fort Macleod. One Mountie was driving the cart and another was riding alongside. Both the horses were sorrels. It was the spring of the year, and when we forded the Kootenai River I thought that the high water was going to be the end of me. The cart whipped around and started to turn over, but the driver threw his weight against it and we made it across all right.

On the other side of the river the Mounties unshackled me and went off into the woods for quite a while, leaving me alone. I figured they were giving me a chance to escape, but since I had promised Red Crow to turn myself in I stayed right there. Presently the Mounties returned and said, "Well, you had your chance. Now you are going to the Sandy [the guard house]."

[It is quite possible that Canadian officials had given orders that the Chief be allowed to escape. The Chief was a United [648] States Indian, and this fact constituted rather a sticky wicket in Canadian-American relations. According to official Canadian Government records, the Chief, Young Pine and Wolf Sitting (called "The Scout") were in custody at Ft. Macleod from 18 May to 13 June, 1889, during which time American authorities made no response to communication on the subject from S. B. Steele, Superintendent of Macleod District. The Chief was smart enough to keep his mouth shut about having taken the scalp of an American Indian, so he was charged only with transporting stolen property into Canada. No formal complaint was ever filed by the owners of the stolen horses, so all three prisoners were released for want of evidence against them. Calf Robe, who turned himself in on 21 June, also was released.]

A couple of days after they locked me up, the Mounties brought in Wolf Sitting and Young Pine who also had turned themselves in to the Agent on the advice of Red Crow.

At this time there was a part-Indian scout and interpreter for the Mounties named Joe Potts. We Indians called him *Kyái-o-kos:* Bear Child. He was the grandfather of Francis and Aloysius Potts who now live in Browning. One day Potts came and took

657 721 On the 31st July I received a telegram from Col. Otis that the agent at Fort Belknap had reported that four of his Indians had left their agency on the 27th to raid the Bloods. I wired to Superintendent Steele at Macleod, and sent an Indian to warn the Indians on the reserve. I believe the Belknaps succeeded in getting away with two horses, and if so, I think it was a very salutary lesson for the Bloods, calculated to lessen their conceit and teach them not to provoke reprisals.

657 Of quite a different cut from Superintendents Steele and Deane was the Agent of the Blood Reserve, William Pocklington. Pocklington, a British gentleman of the old school and a close friend of the Prince of Wales (later King Edward the Seventh), went west with the "originals" of the Northwest Mounted Police in 1874. 657 648 Having joined the Indian Department in 1881, Pocklington assumed the position of Agent of the Blood Reserve in 1884, just a year before the start of the Riel Rebellion. During the very dangerous period of the Rebellion, the Blood Agent camped right among his high-spirited Indians, and it was no small measure of his efforts which dissuaded the Canadian Blackfoots from joining the Metis-Cree in an insurrection which, if successful, would have rewritten the history of the Canadian Northwest.

657 Pocklington, respected by White and Indian alike, was a man of unimpeachable courage and probity, and although his account of the Chief's last war party (as related by Young Pine) suffers from translation into English by the interpreter—Indians have a very special way of telling a story, and unless you are an experienced linguist you can get all balled up in the translation—Pocklington's letters to the Indian Commissioner present both a comprehensive and reasonably accurate portrait of the events of the time and also make clear the steadfast and courageous efforts of the Agent in support of his Indian charges.

REPORT FOR APRIL May 4, 1889.

A rumour is in the camp that some of the Bloods had recently been killed south of the Line, but whether there is any truth in the matter I have so far been unable to find out.

A party of six stole away in the night and have been away long enough to get into trouble.

177 Blackfoot became engulfed by white-man culture. This was the
175 period of the most individualistic and most vicious combat between the two groups. The tensions built up through the decade of the 1860's culminated in the Baker massacre of Heavy-Runner's band of Peigan in January of 1870.[25] This effectively ended hostilities between the two groups in United States territory. However, the departure of the Hudson's Bay Company and the influx of "free traders" into the country north of the International Border brought about a considerably different situation for the Blood Band. Near the north end of what is now the Blood Reserve, traders from the United States established two forts whose main purpose was to vend whiskey to the Indians. Around these forts considerable violence occurred, for example the murder of Calf Shirt, and the Cree-Assiniboin massacre.[26] To halt this frontier violence the Royal Northwest Mounted Police were established in 1873 and began their historic march west the
648 following year.[27] Four years later the Blood, Peigan,
175 Siksika (Blackfoot), and other chiefs signed Treaty Number Seven, which ended the whiskey trade and governs many white-Indian relations to this day.[28]

657 Reserve period.--From 1877 to the present day the Blood have been subject to the administration of their external affairs by the Canadian Government through the bureau known variously as the "Indian Department" or "Indian Affairs

> 159 strict. They used to strap us all the time. I wouldn't take that now. Later, there was this one guy, Mr. ______. He used to just talk to you. He talked real good. When he talked to you, you didn't feel like cutting up or making mischief.
>
> These girls around here, well I guess you know about them. They're always out in the bushes with these guys. At school they write letters to each other, meet at the dances. Most of them meet at the Sun Dance. They go around the camp to meet. They go around under blankets so no one can recognize them.
>
> I've been pretty rough on the girls too. You know, go out and start wrestlin' around right away. I used to go out with this girl in Stand-off. We'd go off and she'd say, "I saw you out with that girl," and I'd say, I saw you out with that guy," and we'd fight. We'd get real jealous. But I'm not a guy who likes to fool around.
>
> A lot of guys, they do a lot of fooling around. When they get married they remember the past and get jealous, beat up their wife. These girls, they go around with these guys, they're easy. I don't want to marry one of them. I'm not going to get married but this one girl is sure putting the pressure on me.
>
> Last year, I had this job. Made good money. After I quit work I had $195 and was goin' to buy a car. Well, I started buying clothes, goin' to rodeos, spendin' it little by little. Well, Calgary [stampede] came along, and I went to Calgary. I had about $100 left. I came back broke. You gotta have money in Calgary but it was worth it. I don't miss the car unless I'm walkin'.

571 These are some of the influences upon the young
person growing up on the Blood Reserve. One notes a strong
emphasis upon interpersonal relations. And, although many
of these are of an ambivalent or aggressive nature, they
[593] seem to be valued. Father, mother, sister, uncle, grand-
[603] father, and an old man are important figures in the young
[605] man's life. His cousin, demanding as he is, is also im-
● [648] portant. When the young Indian extends his quest for human

571 contact beyond the immediate Reserve community, he runs
648 afoul of the ambivalent relations between the Blood and
white communities. Both communities hold mixed feelings
about one another and attempt to discourage external relations.
562 Male-female relations are tenuous. From the
593 strained relations between brother and sister to the aggressive
acts between sweethearts and spouses this pattern
emerges. It is a common pattern. Independent young men
and women cannot easily change attitudes learned in the
rough and tumble of parental marital crises and intercultural
hostility.

Athletics

526 This competitive independence would have been more
[155] apparent if it were possible to include the various athletic
[555] activities engaged in by the young men. For the young
Blood, these activities lead to personal achievement, and,
therefore, they select activities that they do well. What
the young man does well has to do with his general background
[541] and the opportunities it provides. Several of the
young men of the sample, brought up in a ranching or stock
rearing environment, specialized in rodeo events such as
calf roping and bronc riding. Others, only marginally connected
with this life also chose to compete in bronc riding.
524 Many homes that are devoid of livestock sport a "bucking

175 The young men of this early period were people re-
883 moved from the everyday cares of trading and counselling.
The active outdoor life seems their lot and their preference.
They chose to spend their time swimming their horses and
riding and walking about the white man's enclosure; uncon-
178 cerned and proud. Excepting for the contemporary compulsive
modesty of the modern Blood, this pattern of behavior seems
[461] to closely represent the ideal of the young today. This
unconcern for the more serious aspects of trading manifests
itself today in the modern young Blood's preferences for the
outdoor active occupations, the occupations with minimal in-
vestment and time requirements, and for practical cash re-
wards. Thus, again the modern values seem to rest upon
earlier foundations. Yesterday, as today, life had its
serious aspects.

> 175 We could plainly discern the young men driving whole herds [of buffalo] from different directions, until these came within scent of the smoke when they dispersed.[33]
>
> [721] [648] Painted Feather's band, including thirty-three principal men arrived; there are no young men with them, for those have all been to war since the middle of last month toward the Rocky Mountains, in search of Snake Indians, and are expected to return soon.[34]
>
> 578 175 A band of Blackfeet arrived, loaded with fresh buffalo meat. They informed us of a quarrel between Painted Feather's band and the Cold band, caused by a woman who had been debauched from the latter; the young men belonging to the former went for her; a dispute rose, four of the party were wounded, and the woman shot in the leg. This affair has caused the Cold band to separate from the others.[35]

though still in his mid-twenties, was to succeed 439
Mitchell at Fort McKenzie and remain in command
until just before the post was abandoned. Jacob [124]
Berger, the interpreter who was already on the scene,
was an old mountain hand. It was he who had opened
the Company's trade with the Blackfeet in 1830.

The arrival of the *Flora* would swell the number of [181]
whites at the fort from twenty-seven to nearly eighty,
barely enough for comfort when one considered that
the Blackfeet had a well-earned reputation as the most
warlike of all the Plains tribes. At the time of Maximilian's visit, 161
the population of the Blackfeet nation
was estimated at between 18,000 and 20,000. The 619
nation was divided into three tribes that spoke a 721
common language but were not adverse to making
war on each other, given proper provocation—which
was often very slight. Maximilian identified the tribes 101
as: (1) the Siksika, or the proper Blackfeet; (2) the
Kahna, or Blood Indians; (3) the Piegan. These tribes 131
inhabited the same general area in the Rockies and
their western slopes to the north of Fort McKenzie.
The Bloods were accounted to be the fiercest, with 181
the Siksika running a close second. Maximilian gives
a better report of the Piegans' proclivities than do 177
other authorities, but he noted that all the tribes were 175
highly dangerous:

> They are always dangerous to white men who are hunting singly in the mountains, especially to beaver hunters, and kill them whenever they fall into their hands; hence the armed troops of the traders keep up a constant war with them. It was said that in the year 1832, they shot fifty-eight Whites and, a couple of years before that time, above eighty.

After entertaining the welcoming committee from 439
the fort with a hurried breakfast on board the *Flora*, 648
the travelers pushed on upriver toward their destination.
Fort McKenzie had been hastily thrown up the
previous year under the direction of David Mitchell.
It replaced an even more primitive establishment that

was built by James Kipp in 1831 after the conclusion of a peace treaty, signed by chiefs of the Blackfoot nation, the Assiniboins, and Kenneth McKenzie. In view of what was to happen during the 1833 trading session, this treaty possesses a certain poignancy: 439 648

> We send greetings to all mankind! Be it known unto all nations, that the most ancient, most illustrious, and most numerous tribes of the red skins, lords of the soil from the banks of the great waters unto the tops of the mountains, upon which the heavens rest, have entered into solemn league and covenant to make, preserve, and cherish a firm and lasting peace, that so long as the water runs, or grass grows, they may hail each other as brethren and smoke the calumet in friendship and security. 648
>
> On the vigil of the feast of St. Andrew, in the year eighteen hundred and thirty one, the powerful and distinguished nation of the Blackfeet, Piegan, and Blood Indians, by their ambassadors, appeared at Fort Union, near the spot where the Yellow Stone River unites its current with the Missouri, and in the council-chamber of the Governor Kenneth M'Kenzie met the principal chief of all the Assiniboin nation, the Man that holds the Knife, attended by his chiefs of council, le Brechu, le Borgne, the Sparrow, the Bear's Arm, la Terre qui Tremble, and l'Enfant de Medicine, when, conforming to all ancient customs and ceremonies, and observing the due mystical signs enjoined by the grand medicine-lodges, a treaty of peace and friendship was entered into between the high contracting parties, and is testified by their hands and seals hereunto annexed, hereafter and for ever to live as brethren of one large united happy family; and may the Great Spirit, who watcheth over us all, approve our conduct and teach us to love one another.

Maximilian was to discover how these lofty sentiments were observed in practice, but now, after a dozen miles of soggy sailing, beset by rain and clouds of mosquitoes, the *Flora* approached its goal: 122

[p. 99-B]

56: Maximilian   N, T-5   (1833) 1976
NF6 Blackfoot NF6
Montana

AUGUST 9, 1833

We passed the last winding of the river, and a most interesting scene presented itself. A prairie extends along the north bank, at a point to which, projecting towards the river, we saw Fort Mc Kenzie, on which the American flag was displayed. [*See color plate on pages 122–123*]. A great number of Indian tents was erected in the plain, which was covered with the red population in various groups, all of whom hastened to the bank. Near to the fort, the men (about 800 Blackfeet) were drawn up in a close body, like a well-ordered battalion. They formed a long dark brown line, with a black stripe at the top, which was occasioned by their black hair. The palisades and the roof of the fort, as well as the neighbouring trees, were occupied by Indian women and their children, singly, or in groups, and the whole prairie was covered with them. The smoke of the powder rose in the fort, and the thunder of the cannon re-echoed from the banks. 648 ● 177

The fire of musketry among the mass of the Indian warriors was uninterrupted, and their war cry sounded over to us, while our vessel, in spite of the rain, kept up a brisk fire. In front of the Indians we saw three or four chiefs in red and [272]

[p. 100-A]

56: Maximilian N, T-5 (1833) 1976
NF6 Blackfoot NF6
Montana

blue uniforms, trimmed with lace, and wearing round hats 648
with plumes of feathers. The most distinguished among them 177
was Mehkskehme-Sukahs (the iron shirt), dressed in a scar-
let uniform, with blue facings and lace, with a drawn sabre [292]
in his hand; riding without stirrups, he managed, with great
dexterity, his light bay horse, which was made very restiff by
the firing of the musketry. The most respected chief among [553]
the Blackfeet, at this time, was the Spotted Elk, who, after a
successful battle with the Flatheads, had changed his name,
and was now called Ninoch-Kiaiu (chief of the bears).

We approached the landing-place, and at length set foot on
shore, amidst a cloud of smoke caused by the firing of the
Indians and of the *engagés* of the fort, who were drawn up in
a line on the bank. Here we were received by the whole popu-
lation, with the Indian chiefs at their head, with whom we
all shook hands. The Chief of the Bears was quite an original:
his countenance, which was not very handsome, with a large
crooked nose, was partly hid by his long hair. On his head he [212]
had a round felt hat, with a brass rim, and a silver medal on
his breast. We were led through a long double line of the red
men, the expression of whose countenances and their various
dresses greatly amused us. When we arrived at the fort there

[p.100-B]

was no end of the shaking of hands; after which we longed 648
for repose, and distributed our baggage in the rooms. 177

August 10, 1833

Having made our arrangements on the first day of our arrival, 439
and viewed the Indian camp, with its many dogs, and old 177
dirty brown leather tents, we were invited, together with Mr. [574]
Mitchell, to a feast, given by the Blackfoot chief, Mehkskehme-
Sukahs (the iron shirt). We proceeded to a large circle in the [417]
middle of the camp, enclosed with a kind of fence of boughs
of trees, which contained part of the tents, and was designed [685]
to confine the horses during the night, for the Indians are
so addicted to horse-stealing that they do not trust each
other. The hut of the chief was spacious; we had never before [362]
seen so handsome a one; it was full fifteen paces in diameter,
and was very clean and tastefully decorated. We took our [281]
seats, without ceremony, on buffalo skins, spread out on the [352]
left hand of the chief, round the fire, in the centre of the tent, [354]
which was enclosed in a circle of stones.

Our host was a tall, robust man, who at this time had no
other clothes than his breech-cloth; neither women nor children
were visible. A tin dish was set before us, which contained [262]
dry grated meat, mixed with sweet berries, which we
ate with our fingers, and found very palatable. After we had 431
finished, the chief ate what was left in the dish, and took out 439
of a bag a chief's scarlet uniform, with blue facings and yellow
lace, which he had received from the English, six red [576]
and black plumes of feathers, a dagger with its sheath, a
coloured pocket-handkerchief, and two beaver skins, all which
he laid before Mr. Mitchell as a present, who was obliged to
accept these things whether he liked or not, thereby laying
himself under the obligation of making presents in return, and
especially a new uniform. When the chief began to fill his 439
pipe, made of green talc, we rose and retired (quite in the [576]
Indian fashion) in silence, and without making any salutations. [276]
We crept through the small door, which was besieged
by numerous dogs, and stepped over the foremost, who
grinned at us maliciously. Mr. Mitchell was immediately invited [574]
to three or four similar feasts, an honour which can
only suit an Indian stomach. [*For a portrait of Mehkskehme-
Sukahs, see page 134.*][A]

In the afternoon the *engagés* of the fort gave us what they 000
call baptism; namely, a welcome on our happy arrival in this

[p 101-A]

[A] [See Category 622, p.134--Analyst]

horse with them. Other hunters were sent out with the 000
Indians, and we soon received information that a good many buffaloes had been killed.

AUGUST 22, 1833 [FIELD JOURNAL]

The afternoon was very hot and the Indians bathed in the river in great numbers, including women, girls, and children. They swam to the keel-boat and sprang from it into the river. The noise from all this was very great. In our rooms, three to five Indians sat incessantly, for whom one had to stuff the pipe constantly. They were too lazy to rise and fetch fire themselves, so I had to light even my own pipe for them. It was not different in the other rooms of the fort, either, particularly in the quarters of Berger, the old interpreter. Dreidoppel and Papin returned late. They had shot a bighorn sheep this morning and brought the skin back with them. On the first day they had ridden until nine at night and had seen a great many antelope, had shot at some but did not get any. They also saw a herd of seventy elk. During the night they slept in a place where we had made an excursion recently with Mr. Mitchell. From there they rode onward and shot this sheep. The Indian cut open the animal immediately and ate the kidneys and half of the liver raw. Then they grilled the meat. In the evening Papin shot a buffalo bull, and the Indian immediately ate his heart arteries in the raw state.

AUGUST 24, 1833 [FIELD JOURNAL]

In the cool of the evening, sitting in front of our doors, we had 648
a long talk with Mr. Mitchell about the abuse of selling 273
439

56: Maximilian N, T-5 (1833) 1976
NF6 Blackfoot NF6
Montana

whiskey to the Indians, whereby they become bad, dissolute, lazy, and, therefore, dangerous. They omit, because of this, to sell good furs and merchandise to the Whites. The women, who know quite well that they profit nothing from their labour since the men barter it for whiskey immediately and bring nothing home, tan the skins only half-way and badly. In 1816, the government issued a regulation that prohibited the sale of spirits to the Indians and allowed the importation of only a sufficient quantity to provide a half-pint per day to each man engaged in the service of the fur companies. Recently an amendment has been made that no whiskey at all may be imported. The Indian agents, who should be living permanently among the Indians, are entrusted, along with military personnel, the task of monitoring the importation of spirits. But not only do they not live amongst the Indians—they come out only once each year—they tolerate everything to happen without reprimand. (Some of them are related to leading men of the fur companies as well.) Nonetheless, they receive high salaries from the government, which bestows every year considerable gifts upon the Indians through them. Should these gentlemen carry out their obligations, the harmful consumption of whiskey among the Indians might be effectively controlled. In the surroundings of Fort Mc Kenzie it might be difficult to carry out this regulation of the government of the United States, as all the Indians who live in these northern regions may get as much whiskey as they want from the English. Consequently, should they not get whiskey from the American Fur Company, all trade would withdraw completely from here and be turned to the English. At the Mandans and Minnetarees there is no whiskey, and Mr. Mc Kenzie has no stock there of it at all.

648
273
439

[657]

[P.107-B]

in the fort during the night. Towards seven in the morning 000
we heard some musket-shot fired in the fort, and the band 439
of our friend Kutonapi, about sixty or seventy in number,
advanced to the fort, headed by three chiefs, who were ad- 177
mitted. All the principal chiefs of the Piegans arrived after- [292]
wards, whom Mr. Mitchell clothed in red uniforms, calico
shirts, and every other article of dress—hung about their [622]
necks round looking-glasses, or silver medals with the bust [301]
of the President. The most amusing was when he put on them the new red felt hats, with red plumes of feathers. Their prodigious, long, thick hair was too large for the hat, and the whole was, therefore, made into a great bunch, and stuffed into the hat before it could be put on their heads. They suffered themselves to be dressed like children, and received other presents, such as powder, ball, tobacco, knives, &c. The dress of every chief might be estimated at ninety dollars.

In the meantime, a newly-arrived band of the Siksika had pitched their tents, and the fort was again surrounded by a multitude of dangerous men. Sometimes they threatened to fire at our people when they appeared on the pickets, and several things were stolen in the fort, because many men were still admitted on account of the trade. The chiefs were constantly begging, as well as the meanest Indians, and this may be justly stated as a most troublesome habit of the Blackfeet.
In this respect the other tribes have much more delicacy. The 648 ●
Crows, in their visits and negotiations, presented the Blackfeet with valuable articles, costly feather caps, shields, horses, &c., but received nothing at all when they came to the latter, by which all the other Indian nations are incensed against the Blackfeet.

As the Indians became very troublesome towards evening, 000
Mr. Mitchell had all the arms loaded with ball. Three detachments, each consisting of nine men and an officer, were commanded to keep guard, and he gave orders to fire from the pickets the instant an Indian attempted to climb over. All the chiefs were made acquainted with this order, that they might communicate it to their people. A new report being spread, that a thousand Assiniboins were approaching, the guards were doubled, and the officers divided, from which we strangers were not excepted.

During this state of imprisonment our horses suffered from want of food, as they could not be driven into the meadows, and there was but little hay in the fort. The Indians had used or burnt the hay that was in the prairies higher up on the

[p. 117-B]